BOOK AND HEART
ESSAYS ON LITERATURE AND LIFE

T. W. HIGGINSON

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BY

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

"My Book and Heart must never part"

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NOTE

THANKS are given to the editors of the *Forum*, *New World*, *Contemporary Review*, *Outlook*, *Independent*, *Philistine*, and Boston *Transcript* for such of the papers contained in this volume as originally appeared in those publications.

T. W. H.

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LITERATURE

I

DISCONTINUANCE OF THE GUIDE-BOARD

PERHAPS the last indulgence yet to be won by the writer of fiction will be that of discontinuing the time-honored institution of the guide-board. Many still expect it to stand visible on his closing pages, at least, and to be marked, when necessary, "Private Way," "Dangerous Passing," that there may be no mistake. Yet surely all tendencies now lead to the abandonment of that time-honored proclamation; and this change comes simply from the fact that fiction is drawing nearer to life. In real life, as we see it, the moral is usually implied and inferential, not painted on a board; you must often look twice, or look many times, in order to read it. The eminent sinner dies amid tears and plaudits, not in the state-prison, as he should; the seed of the righteous is often seen begging bread. We have to read very carefully between the lines if we would

fully recognize the joy of Marcellus exiled, the secret ennui of Cæsar with a senate at his heels. Thus it is in daily life—that is, in nature; and yet many still think it a defect in a story if it leaves a single moral influence to be worked out by the meditation of the reader.

On my lending to an intelligent young woman, the other day, Mr. Hamlin Garland's remarkable volume, *Main-Travelled Roads*, she returned it with the remark that she greatly admired all the stories except the first, which seemed to her immoral. It closed, indeed, as she justly pointed out, with a striking scene in which a long-absent lover carries off the wife and child of a successful but unworthy rival, and the tale ends with the words: "The sun shone on the dazzling, rustling wheat; the fathomless sky as a sea bent over them, and the world lay before them." But when I pointed out to her, what one would think must be clear at a glance to every reader, that behind this momentary gleam of beauty lay an absolutely hopeless future; that though the impulse of action was wholly generous, and not even passional, yet Nemesis was close behind; and that the mere fact of the woman's carrying another man's baby in her arms would pre-

vent all permanent happiness with her lover; my friend could only reply that it was all very true, but she had never thought of it. In other words, the guide-board was not there. The only thing that could have disarmed her criticism would have been a distinct announcement on the author's part: "N.B. The situation is dangerous;" just as Miss Edgeworth used to append to every particularly tough statement: "N.B. This is a fact."

The truth is, that in Miss Edgeworth's day they ordered the matter differently. Either the sinners and saints were called up by name in the closing chapter, and judgment rendered in detail, or else very explicit reasons were given why the obvious award was impracticable. "The Lord Lilburnes of this hollow world are not to be pelted with the soft roses of poetical justice. He is alone with old age and in the sight of death." Thus stands the guide-board at the close of Bulwer's *Night and Morning;* and in the discontinuance of such aids there is doubtless a certain risk. Some of the most powerful works of modern fiction have apparently failed to impress their moral on the careless reader. All really strong novels involving illicit love are necessarily tragedies at last, not vaudevilles; and nowhere is

this more true than in French literature. The clever woman who said that nothing was worse than French immorality except French morality, simply failed to go below the surface; for in France the family feeling is so potent that the actual destruction of the domestic tie is often punished with cruel severity, even by the most tolerant novelists. The retribution in *Madame Bovary*, for instance, is almost too merciless, since it wreaks itself even upon the body of the poor sinner after death, and pursues her unoffending child to the poorhouse. No one has painted a climax of unlawful passion more terrific than that portrayed in the closing pages of *Monsieur de Camors;* the guilty pair, false to every human obligation, successful in their wishes to their own destruction, *numinibus vota exaudita malignis*, detached by their crime from all the world and finally from one another, wander like gloomy shadows amid an earthly paradise, meeting sometimes unwarily, but never exchanging a word. Yet both these novels are sometimes classed among the bad books, simply because the guide-board is omitted and the reader left to draw his own moral.

The same misjudgment is often passed for the same reason upon Tolstoï's *Anna Karéni-*

na, which surely is, among all books upon this same theme, the most utterly relentless. Not merely does it not contain, from beginning to end, a prurient scene or even a voluptuous passage, but its plot moves as inexorably and almost as visibly as a Greek fate. Even Hawthorne allows his guilty lovers, in *The Scarlet Letter*, a moment of delusive happiness; even Hawthorne recognizes the unquestionable truth that the foremost result of a broken law is sometimes an enchanting sense of freedom. Tolstoï tolerates no such enchantment; and he has written the only novel of illicit love, perhaps, in which the offenders—both being persons otherwise high-minded and noble—fail to derive from their sin one hour of even temporary happiness. From the moment of their yielding we see the shadow already over them; the author is as merciless to these beings of his own construction as if he hated them; and one feels like calling in an Omar Khayyám to defend once more the created against an unjust creator. Yet *Anna Karénina* has often been condemned as immoral, in the absence of the guide-board.

If, now, we consider, in the light of these striking instances, what it is that has brought about this gradual disuse of the overt and vis-

ible moral, we shall soon see that it is a part of the general tendency of modern literature to do without external aids to make its meaning clear. There is undoubtedly a tendency to rely more and more upon what has been well called "the presumption of brains" in the reader. Note, for instance, the steady disappearance of the italic letter from the printed page. Once used as freely as in an epistle from one of Thackeray's fine ladies, it is now employed by careful writers almost wholly to indicate foreign words or book titles; a change in which Emerson and Hawthorne were conspicuous leaders. There is a feeling that only a very crude literary art will now depend on typography for shades of meaning which should be rendered by the very structure of the sentence. The same fate of banishment is overtaking the exclamation-point, so long used by poets—conspicuously by Whittier—as a note of admiration also. Here, too, as in the other case, the emphasis is now left to render itself; and even the last verse of the poem, which often—to cite Whittier again—contained the detached moral of the lay, is now commonly clipped off, leaving the reader to draw the moral for himself. The poet now makes his point as best he can, and leaves it

without a guide-board; in this foreshadowing precisely that change which has also come over the prose novel.

Granting that much fiction, at any rate, has a moral expressed or implied, it is to be observed that all fiction has changed its note in other respects within the last century, and must accept its own laws. Formerly conveying its moral often through a symbol, it now conveys it, if at all, by direct narrative. The distinction has never been better put than in a remarkable and little-known letter addressed by Heine on his death-bed (1856) to Varnhagen von Ense, in giving a personal introduction to Ferdinand Lassalle. "The new generation," wrote Heine, "means to enjoy itself and make the best of the visible; we of the older one bowed humbly before the invisible, yearned after shadow kisses and blue-flower fragrances, denied ourselves, wept and smiled and were perhaps happier than these fierce gladiators who walk so proudly to meet their death-struggle." The blue-flower allusion is to the favorite ideal symbol of the German Novalis; and certainly the young men who grew up fifty or sixty years ago in America obtained some of their very best tonic influences through such thoroughly ideal tales as

that writer's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, Fouqué's *Sintram*, Hoffmann's *Goldene Topf*, and Richter's *Titan;* whether these were read in the original German or in the translations of Carlyle, Brooks, and others. All these books are now little sought, and rather alien to the present taste. To these were added, in English, such tales as Poe's *William Wilson* and Hawthorne's *The Birthmark* and *Rappaccini's Daughter;* and, in French, Balzac's *Le Peau de Chagrin*, which Professor Longfellow used warmly to recommend to his college pupils. Works like these represented the prevailing sentiment of a period; they exerted a distinct influence on the moulding of a generation. Their moral was irresistible for those who really cared enough for the books to read them; they needed no guide-boards; the guide-board was for the earlier efforts at realism, before it had proved its strength.

Realism has since achieved its maturity, and undoubtedly has won—if it has not already lost again—possession of the field. Whether its sway be, as many think, a permanent change, or only, as I myself believe, a swing of the pendulum, the fact is the same. It is as useless to resist such changes as it was for Lowell to go on lighting his pipe for years

with flint and steel, which I well remember his doing, rather than accept the innovation of a friction-match. Realism must hold the field so long as it has a right to do it, and it can only be asked to fulfil the conditions of its being. If we excuse it, as we plainly must, from the perpetuation of the guide-board, we can only ask that it shall go on and do its work so well that no such aid shall be needed; that its moral, where there is one, shall be reasonably plain; that is, so clearly put as to produce a minimum of misunderstanding. How important this is may be appreciated when we consider that so great an artist as Goethe, writing *Die Wahlverwandschaften*, expressly, as he thought, to vindicate the marriage laws, was supposed by his whole generation to have written against them, simply through an ill-chosen title and a single unseemly incident. And another reasonable condition is that fiction, being thus set free, should be a law unto itself and stop short of undesirable materials; that it should obey that high and significant maxim of the Roman augurs—never to let the sacred entrails be displayed outside the solemnity of the temple. It is for disregard in this respect, and not for any want of serious purpose—since he usually has such a purpose,

and does not write with levity—that Zola is to be condemned.

But granting these simple conditions fulfilled, the writer of fiction should surely be allowed henceforth to wind up his story in his own way, without formal proclamation of his moral; or, better still, to leave the tale without technical and elaborate winding up, as nature leaves her stories. His work is a great one, to bring comedy and even tragedy down from the old traditions of kingliness to the vaster and more complex currents of modern democratic life. When the elder Scaliger wrote, in 1561, that work on Poetry which so long ruled the traditions of European literature, he defined the difference between tragedy and comedy to consist largely in this—that tragedy concerned itself only with kings, princes, cities, citadels, and camps; *in tragedia reges, principes, ex urbibus, arcibus, castris.* All these things are now changed. Kings, princes, camps, citadels are passing away, and the cities that will soon alone survive them are filled with a democratic world, which awaits its chronicles of joy or pain. The writer of fiction must tell his tale, and leave it to yield its own moral. The careless or hasty reader will often misinterpret it, and would do so were

the guide-board ever so conspicuous; but the serious student will bear away an influence proportioned to the hidden wealth of meaning, and this meaning will be more precious in proportion as he has been left to discern it for himself.

(1892)

II

A KEATS MANUSCRIPT

"TOUCH it," said Leigh Hunt when he showed Bayard Taylor a lock of brown silky hair, "and you will have touched Milton's self." The magic of the lock of hair is akin to that recognized by nomadic and untamed races in anything that has been worn close to the person of a great or fortunate being. Mr. Leland, much reverenced by the gypsies, whose language he speaks and whose lore he knows better than they know it, had a knife about his person which was supposed by them to secure the granting of any request if held in the hand. When he gave it away, it was like the transfer of fairy power to the happy recipient. The same lucky spell is attributed to a piece from the bride's garter, in Normandy, or to pins filched from her dress, in Sussex. For those more cultivated, the charm of this transmitted personality is best embod-

ied in autographs, and the more unstudied and unpremeditated the better. In the case of a poet, nothing can be compared with the interest inspired by the first draft of a poem, with its successive amendments—the path by which his thought attained its final and perfect utterance.

Tennyson, it is reported, was very indignant with those who bore away from his study certain rough drafts of poems, justly holding that the world had no right to any but the completed form. Yet this is what, as students of poetry, we all instinctively wish to do. Rightly or wrongly, we long to trace the successive steps. To some extent, the same opportunity is given in successive editions of the printed work, but here the study is not so much of changes in the poet's own mind as of those produced by the criticisms, often dull or ignorant, of his readers; those especially who fail to catch a poet's very finest thought, and persuade him to dilute it a little for their satisfaction. When I pointed out to Browning some rather unfortunate alterations in his later editions, and charged him with having made them to accommodate stupid people, he admitted the charge and promised to alter them back again, although, of course, he never did. But the changes in an author's manuscript al-

most always come either from his own finer perception and steady advance toward the precise conveyance of his own thought, or else from the aid he receives in this from some immediate friend or adviser — most likely a woman — who is in close sympathy with his own mood. The charm is greatest, of course, in seeing and studying and touching the actual page, just as it is. For this a photograph is the best substitute, since it preserves the original for the eye, as does the phonograph for the ear. Even with the aid of photography only, there is as much difference between the final corrected shape and the page showing the gradual changes as between the graceful yacht lying in harbor, anchored, motionless, with sails furled, and the same yacht as a winged creature, gliding into port. Let us now see, by actual comparison, how one of Keats's yachts came in.

There lies before me a photograph of the first two stanzas of Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" as they stood when first written. The manuscript page containing them was given to John Howard Payne by George Keats, the poet's brother, who lived for many years at Louisville, Kentucky, and died there; but it now belongs to Mr. R. S. Chilton, United

States Consul at Goderich, Ontario, who has kindly given me a photograph of it. The verses are in Keats's well-known and delicate handwriting, and exhibit a series of erasures and substitutions which are now most interesting, inasmuch as the changes in each instance enrich greatly the value of the word-painting.

To begin with, the title varies slightly from that now adopted, and reads simply "On Melancholy," to which the word "Ode" is now prefixed by the printers. In the second line, where he had half written "Henbane" for the material of his incantation, he blots it out and puts "Wolfsbane," instantly abandoning the tamer suggestion and bringing in all the wildness and the superstition that have gathered for years around the Loupgarou and the Wehrwolf. This is plainly no amendment suggested afterward by another person, but is due unmistakably to the quick action of his own mind. There is no other change until the end of the first stanza, where the last two lines were originally written thus:

> "For shade to shade will come too heavily
> And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul."

It is noticeable that he originally wrote "down" for "drown," and, in afterward in-

serting the *r*, put it in the wrong place—after the *o*, instead of before it. This was a slip of the pen only; but it was that word "heavily" which cost him a struggle. The words "too heavily" were next crossed out, and under them written "too sleepily"; then this last word was again erased, and the word "drowsily" was finally substituted—the only expression in the English language, perhaps, which could have precisely indicated the exact shade of debilitating languor he meant.

In the other stanza, it is noticeable that he spells "melancholy," through heedlessness, "melanancholy," which gives a curious effect of prolonging and deepening the incantation; and this error he does not discover or correct. In the same way he spells "fit" "fitt," having perhaps in mind the "fytte" of the earlier poets. These are trifles, but when he alters the line, which originally stood

"But when the melancholy fit shall come,"

and for "come" substitutes "fall," we see at once, besides the merit of the soft alliteration, that he gives more of the effect of doom and suddenness. "Come" was clearly too businesslike. Afterward, instead of

"Then feed thy sorrow on a morning rose,"

On Melancholy

No no go not to Lethe neither twist
Wolfs bane, tight rooted, for its poisonous wine
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kist
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine
Make not your rosary of yew berries
Nor let the beetle or the death moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrows sympathize
For shade to shade will come too drowsily
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul
But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all
And hides the green hill in an April shroud
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose
Or on the eglantine or the dawning
Or on a wealth of globed peonies
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave
And feed deep deep upon her peerless eyes

he substitutes for "feed" the inexpressibly more effective word "glut," which gives at once the exhaustive sense of wealth belonging so often to Keats's poetry; and seems to match the full ecstasy of color and shape and fragrance that a morning rose may hold. Finally, in the line which originally stood

"Or on the rainbow of the dashing wave,"

he strikes out the rather trite epithet "dashing" and substitutes the stronger phrase "salt-sand wave," which is peculiar to him.

All these changes are happily accepted in the common editions of Keats; but these editions make two errors that are corrected by this manuscript and should henceforth be abandoned. In the line usually printed

"Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be,"

the autograph text gives "or" in place of the second "nor," a change consonant with the best usage; and in the line

"And hides the green hill in an April shroud,"

the middle word is clearly not "hill," but "hills." This is a distinct improvement, both because it broadens the landscape and because it averts the jangle of the closing *ll*

with the final words "fall" and "all" in previous lines.

It is a fortunate thing that, in the uncertain destiny of all literary manuscripts, this characteristic document should have been preserved for us. It will be remembered that Keats himself once wrote in a letter that his fondest prayer, next to that for the health of his brother Tom, would be that some child of his brother George "should be the first American poet." This letter, printed by Milnes, was written Oct. 29, 1818. George Keats died about 1851, and his youngest daughter, Isabel, who was thought greatly to resemble her uncle John, both in looks and genius, died sadly at the age of seventeen. It is pleasant to think that we have, through the care exercised by this Americanized brother, an opportunity of coming into close touch with the mental processes of that rare genius which first imparted something like actual color to English words. To be brought thus near to Keats suggests that poem by Browning where he compares a moment's interview with one who had seen Shelley to picking up an eagle's feather on a lonely heath.

(1896)

III

A SHELLEY MANUSCRIPT

WERE I to hear to-morrow that the main library of Harvard University, with every one of its 334,000 volumes, had been reduced to ashes, there is in my mind no question what book I should most regret. It is that unique, battered, dingy little quarto volume of Shelley's manuscript poems in his own handwriting and that of his wife first given by Miss Jane Clairmont (Shelley's "Constantia") to Mr. Edward A. Silsbee, and then presented by him to the library. Not only is it full of that aroma of fascination which belongs to the actual handiwork of a master, but its numerous corrections and interlineations make the reader feel that he is actually travelling in the pathway of that delicate mind. Mr. George E. Woodberry had the use of it; he printed in the *Harvard University ~~Calendar~~* a facsimile of the "Ode to a Skylark" as given in

the manuscript, and has cited many of its various readings in his edition of Shelley's poems. But he has passed by a good many others; and some of these need, I think, for the sake of all students of Shelley, to be put in print, so that in case of the loss or destruction of the precious volume, these fragments at least may be preserved.

There occur in this manuscript the following variations from Prof. Woodberry's text of "The Sensitive Plant"—variations not mentioned by him, for some reason or other, in his footnotes or supplemental notes, and yet not cancelled by Shelley:

"Three days the flowers of the garden fair
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were."
[*Moon* is clearly *morn* in the Harvard MS.]
[III., 1–2.

"And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant."
[The prefatory *And* is not in the Harvard MS.]
[III., 100.

"But the mandrakes and toadstools and docks and darnels
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels."
[For *mandrakes* there appears the word *brambles* in the Harvard MS.] [III., 112.

These three variations, all of which are in-

teresting, are the only ones I have noted as uncancelled in this particular poem, beyond those recorded by Prof. Woodberry. But there are many cases where the manuscript shows, in Shelley's own handwriting, variations subsequently cancelled by him; and these deserve study by all students of the poetic art. His ear was so exquisite and his sense of the *balance* of a phrase so remarkable, that it is always interesting to see the path by which he came to the final utterance, whatever that was. I have therefore copied a number of these modified lines, giving first Prof. Woodberry's text and then the original form of language, as it appears in Shelley's handwriting, italicizing the words which vary, and giving the pages of Prof. Woodberry's edition. The cancellation or change is sometimes made in pen, sometimes in pencil; and it is possible that, in a few cases, it may have been made by Mrs. Shelley.

"Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky."
"Gazed through *its tears* on the tender sky."
[I., 36.

"The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar."
"The beams which dart from many a *sphere*
Of the *starry* flowers whose hues they bear."
[I., 81–82.

"The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears."
"The unseen clouds of the dew, which *lay*
Like fire in the flowers till *dawning day*,
Then *walk* like spirits among the spheres
Each *one* faint with the *odor* it bears."
[I., 86–89.

"Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky."
"Like windless clouds *in* a tender sky."
[I., 98.

"Whose waves never mark, though they never impress."
"Whose waves never *wrinkle*, though they impress." [I., 106.

"Was as God is to the starry scheme."
"Was as *is God* to the starry scheme."
[II., 4.

"As if some bright spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake."
"As some bright spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted *the* heaven while the stars were awake." [II., 17–18.

"The freshest her gentle hands could pull."
"The freshest her gentle hands could *cull*."
[II., 46.

"The sweet lips of the flowers and harm not, did she."
"The sweet lips of flowers," etc. [II., 51.

"Edge of the odorous cedar bark."
"Edge of the odorous *cypress* bark."
[II., 56.

"Sent through the pores of the coffin plank."
"*Ran* through," etc.
[III., 12.

"Between the time of the wind and the snow."
"Between the *term*," etc. [probably accidental].
[III., 50.

"Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes."
"Dammed it with," etc.
[III., 69.

"At noon they were seen, at noon they were felt."
"At noon they were seen & noon they were felt."
["&" perhaps written carelessly for "at."]
[III., 73.

"Their decay and sudden flight from frost."
"Their decay and sudden flight from *the* frost."
[III., 98.

"To own that death itself must be."
"To *think* that," etc.
[III., 128.

These comparisons are here carried no farther than "The Sensitive Plant," except that there is a cancelled verse of Shelley's "Curse" against Lord Eldon for depriving him of his children — a verse so touching that I think

it should be preserved. The verse beginning

"By those unpractised accents of young speech"

began originally as follows:

"By that sweet voice which who could understand
To frame to sounds of love and love divine,
Not thou."

This was abandoned and the following substituted:

"By those pure accents which at my command
Should have been framed to love and lore divine,
Now like a lute, fretted by some rude hand,
Uttering harsh discords, they must echo thine."

This also was erased, and the present form substituted, although I confess it seems to me both less vigorous and less tender. Prof. Woodberry mentions the change, but does not give the cancelled verse. In this and other cases I do not venture to blame him for the omission; since an editor must, after all, exercise his own judgment. Yet I cannot but wish that he had carried his citation, even of cancelled variations, a little further; and it is evident that some future student of poetic art will yet find rich gleanings in the Harvard Shelley manuscript.

(1893)

IV

A WORLD OUTSIDE OF SCIENCE

IT is a commonplace saying—and I think it is Quintilian who recommends that in treating every important subject we should begin from the commonplace, though this is indeed not difficult — that we live in an age of science. We are assured without ceasing, and it is, within just limits, perfectly true, that modern science has transformed the world of thought. The world of action it has certainly transformed. Scientific mechanics are keeping pace, in the most astounding way, with abstract science; and we are all, as has been said, "gazing into the light of the future, our profoundest curiosity quivering under the currents of new thought as a magnet vibrates in the grasp of an induction-coil." The wonders of the Arabian Nights are the commonplaces of living and moving.

It is the crowning beauty of these wonders

that they have gone hand in hand with the progress of democracy, and have placed themselves at its service. A hundred years ago, when a prince wished to travel, he could at best only order clumsy horses to be attached to a clumsy state carriage in the hope of accomplishing, unless torrents or highwaymen interfered, thirty miles a day. It was not until the people got ready to ride that steeds swifter than the wind and stronger than the storm were harnessed in, and glittering bands of steel were spread in twin extension across the continent, that the carriages which bore the people might not swerve from their triumphant way. Two hundred years ago, if a king wished to convey to a distance the news of war or peace, or of the birth of an heir, he could do it best by lighting vast bonfires on successive hills, as in the Agamemnon of Æschylus (*τοιοίδε λαμπαδηφόρων νόμοι*), until the tale was told. It was not until the people became as important as princes that all these lavish and clumsy fires were condensed into one little electric spark; and wires covered the land in a network of tracery, or sank below the ocean, that the humblest of the nation could telegraph to other lands and climes the news of war and peace in his household, or the

birth of an heir to his modest throne. Nay, even while we dwell on these achieved wonders, we are all waiting eagerly for the time when all their apparatus shall be superseded, and laid away in museums of obsolete lumber; and we are all living in expectation of what a day may bring forth. Those of us who in youth saw men still habitually striking a fire with flint and steel may yet live to see nearly every material convenience of life served by absolutely invisible forces. Yes, it is the age of science; beneficent or baleful, saving or slaying, its sway has come.

With this has naturally come a shifting of the old standards of education, and the claim that science, as such, is exclusively to rule the world. An accomplished German *savant*, long resident in this country, once told me that in his opinion poetry, for instance, was already quite superseded, and music and art must soon follow. Literature, he thought, would only endure, if at all, as a means of preserving the results of science, probably in the shape of chemical formulæ. He was a most agreeable man, who always complained that he had made a fatal mistake in his career through rashly taking the whole of the *Diptera*, or two-winged insects, for his scientific task; whereas to have

taken charge of any single genus, as the gnats or the mosquitoes, would have been enough, he thought, for the life-work of a judicious man.

We smile at this as extravagance, and yet we have, by the direct confession of the great leader of modern science, the noble and large-minded Darwin, an instance of almost complete atrophy of one whole side of the mind at the very time when its scientific action was at its highest point. Up to the age of thirty, Darwin tells us, he took intense delight in poetry —Milton, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, and Shelley—while he read Shakespeare with supreme enjoyment. Pictures and music also gave him much pleasure. But at sixty-seven he writes that "for many years he cannot endure to read a line of poetry"; that he has lately tried Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated him; and that he has almost lost all taste for pictures and music. This he records, not with satisfaction, but with "great regret";* he would gladly have it otherwise, but cannot. It is simply that one whole side of his intellectual being was paralyzed; a loss which all the healthy enjoyment of the

* *Life*, by his son, Am. ed. pp. 30, 81.

other side of his nature could scarcely repay. Yet it is possible that the lesson of Darwin's limitations may be scarcely less valuable than that of his achievements. By his strength he revolutionized the world of science. By his weakness he gave evidence that there is a world outside of science.

We cannot, on the one side, deny that Darwin represented the highest type of scientific mind. Nor can we, on the other, deny the value and validity of what he ignored. Of the studies that became extinguished in him, we can say, as Tacitus said when the images of Brutus and Cassius were not carried in the procession: *Eo magis præfulgebant quia non visebantur;* or, as Emerson yet more tersely translates it, "They glared through their absences." It would be easy to multiply testimonies from high scientific authority to this limitation and narrowing of the purely scientific mind. One such recent testimony may be found in an important report of the head of the chemical department of Harvard University, Prof. Josiah P. Cooke; and another in that very remarkable paper in the *Forum* entitled "The Education of the Future," by a man who singularly combines within himself the scientific and literary gifts—Clarence King,

formerly Director of the United States Geological Survey. After weighing more skilfully than I have ever seen it done elsewhere the strength and weakness of the literary or classical training of the past, he thus deals with the other side: "With all its novel powers and practical sense, I am obliged to admit that the purely scientific brain is miserably mechanical; it seems to have become a splendid sort of self-directed machine, an incredible automaton, grinding on with its analyses or constructions. But for pure sentiment, for all that spontaneous, joyous Greek waywardness of fancy, for the temperature of passion and the subtle thrill of ideality, you might as well look to a cast-iron derrick." * For all these, then, we must come back, by the very testimony of those scientific leaders who would seek to be whole men also, to the world outside of science.

If there be an intellectual world outside of science, where is the boundary-line of that world? We pass that boundary, it would seem, whenever we enter the realm usually called intuitive or inspirational; a realm whose characteristic it is that it is not subject to processes or measurable by tests. The yield of

* *The Forum*, March, 1892, p. 29.

this other world may be as real as that of the scientific world, but its methods are not traceable, nor are its achievements capable of being duplicated by the mere force of patient will. Keats, in one of his fine letters, classifies the universe, and begins boldly with "things real, as sun, moon, and passages of Shakespeare." Sun and moon lie within the domain of science; and at this moment the astronomers are following out that extraordinary discovery which has revealed in the bright star Algol a system of three and perhaps four stellar bodies, revolving round each other and influencing each other's motions, and this at a distance so great that the rays of light which reveal them left their home nearly fifty years ago. The imagination is paralyzed before a step so vast; yet it all lies within the domain of science, while science can tell us no more how Macbeth or Hamlet came into existence than if the new astronomy had never been born. It is as true of the poem as of the poet—*Nascitur non fit.* We cannot even define what poetry is; and Thoreau says that there never yet was a definition of it so good but the poet would proceed to disregard it by setting aside all its requisitions.

Shelley says that a man cannot say, "'I will

compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it, for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure."* In the same way Schiller wrote to Körner that what impressed him when he sat down to write was usually some single impulse or harmonious tone, and not any clear notion of what he proposed writing. "These observations," he says, "arise from an 'Ode to Light' with which I am now busy. I have as yet no idea what the poem will be, but a presentiment; and yet I can promise beforehand that it will be successful."†

So similar are the laws of all production in the imaginative arts that we need only to turn to a great musician's description of the birth of music to find something almost precisely parallel. In a letter from Mozart, lately condensed by Professor Royce,‡ he writes: "My

* "Defense of Poetry," *Essays and Letters*, Am. ed. i. 56.

† *Corresp. of Schiller and Körner*, ii. 173.

‡ *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 456.

ideas come as they will, I don't know how, in a stream. . . . If I can hold on to them, they begin to join on to one another, as if they were bits that a pastry cook should join on in his pantry. And now my soul gets heated, and if nothing disturbs me the piece grows larger and brighter, until, however long it is, it is all finished at once, so that I can see it at a glance." In both arts, therefore, there occurs something which it is hardly extravagant to call inspiration, or direct inflow from some fountain unknown, and lying wholly outside of all science. There is absolutely no point at which science can even begin to investigate it, because the first essential of scientific observation—the recurrence of similar phenomena under similar conditions—is wanting. Coleridge's poem of "Kubla Khan" was left hopelessly a fragment by the inconvenient arrival of a man from Porlock; but there is no ray of evidence that its continuation could have been secured by placing Coleridge, at the same hour next day, before the same table, with the same pens and paper, and planting a piece of artillery before the front door to compel every resident of Porlock to keep his distance.

We have now the key to that atrophy on

one side of Darwin's nature. It was in his case the Nemesis of Science — the price he paid for his magnificent achievements. Poetry is not a part of science, but it is, as Wordsworth once said, "the antithesis of science"; it is a world outside. Thus far, as a literary man, I am entitled to go, and feel myself on ground with which I am tolerably familiar. But the suggestion irresistibly follows—and it is surely a momentous one—if poetry represents a world outside of science, is there nothing else outside? This question I must leave specialists to answer, hazarding only a few hints which are confessedly those of a layman only.

There is unquestionably much in common between the poetic impulse, the impulse of religious emotion, and the ethical or moral instinct, if instinct it be. So plain is this, that the mere attempt to recognize in either of these anything outside of science is met at the outset with suspicion by those who have risked their all on the faith that science includes all. This was strikingly seen, for instance, in the Brooklyn Ethical Association, the other day, when Dr. Lewis G. Janes, in a valuable address on "Life as a Fine Art," had allowed himself to say that "the art-impulse, spontaneous, vital, creative, breaks through

the bonds of constraining legalism and restores the soul to freedom." He was at once taken to task by his stricter associates, and was assured that this was by no means "psychological science or evolution," but that he had "given poetry and rhetoric in the place of cold facts and scientific deductions."* From their point of view, the critics were perfectly right. It is a very dangerous thing to admit that there is a world outside of science. Once recognize thus much, and then, after the art-impulse has burst through and claimed its place in that world, who knows but the devout impulse, at least, may also take its place by the side of the art-impulse, and the soul be restored to freedom in good earnest?

If the devout impulse thus takes its place with the poetic, in a world outside of science, the question must inevitably follow, whether the ethical emotion is to take its place there also. At present, as we know, the followers of Herbert Spencer claim to have utterly captured, measured, and solved it from the point of view of science; and they dismiss the whole conception of Intuitive Morals as completely

* Brooklyn Ethical Association, *Essays on Evolution*, pp. 411, 429.

as Bentham thought he had annihilated the word *ought*, when he said frankly fifty years ago that it was meaningless, and should be expunged from the English language, or at least from the vocabulary of morals.* It is claimed by Mr. Spencer's ablest American advocate that "the moral sense is not ultimate, but derivative, and that it has been built up out of slowly organized experiences of pleasure or pain."† But if no possible experience of pleasure or pain, as it passes, can give us the slightest key to the sacredness and strength that lie in the word *ought*, how can that strength or sacredness be found by multiplying such pleasure or pain into millions of instances, or centuries of time, or countless generations of men? If it is perfectly supposable, and per-

* "The talisman of arrogance, indolence, and ignorance is to be found in a single word, an authoritative imposture, which in these pages it will be frequently necessary to unveil. It is the word 'ought' —'ought or ought not,' as circumstances may be. In deciding 'You ought to do this,' 'You ought not to do it,' is not every question of knowledge set at rest? If the use of the word be admissible at all, it 'ought' to be banished from the vocabulary of morals."—Bentham's *Deontology*, i. 31, 32.

† Mr. John Fiske, in *Essays of Brooklyn Ethical Society*, p. 94.

haps known to our personal experience, that a man may do what he simply recognizes as right, although it appears likely to cause only pain and not pleasure to every person concerned in the matter, present or to come, then how can any accumulation of pleasurable experience culminate in the word *right*, any more than the utmost efforts bestowed by horticulture upon the production of the potato, which is a tuber, can culminate in converting it into an orange, which is a fruit? If this is all that the most modern phase of science can offer, it seems to me an involuntary admission that science has here stepped beyond its limits, and that it may be necessary to remand not only poetry and religion, but even ethics, to the world that lies outside of it.

Yet on these points I should hardly venture an opinion, in consideration of the fact that there are so many who have devoted their lives to these especial investigations. My whole aim has been to assert from the point of view of literature that a world outside of science exists. This done, I must leave the delineation of its boundaries to those whose studies have extended far more profoundly than mine into the astronomy of the soul.

(1892.)

V

A BIT OF WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

AFTER the applause won by Mr. Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, a little reaction is not strange; and this has already taken, in some quarters, a form quite unjust and unfair. Certainly any one who spent so much as a week or two in camp, thirty years ago, must be struck with the extraordinary freshness and vigor of the book. No one except Tolstoï, within my knowledge, has brought out the daily life of war so well; it may be said of these sentences, in Emerson's phrase, "Cut these and they bleed." The breathlessness, the hurry, the confusion, the seeming aimlessness, as of a whole family of disturbed ants, running to and fro, yet somehow accomplishing something at last; all these aspects, which might seem the most elementary and the easiest to depict, are yet those surest to be omitted, not merely by the nov-

elists, but by the regimental histories themselves.

I know that when I first read Tolstoï's *War and Peace*, *The Cossacks and Sevastopol*, it seemed as if all other so-called military novels must become at once superannuated and go out of print. All others assumed, in comparison, that bandbox aspect which may be seen in most military or naval pictures; as in the well-known engraving of the death of Nelson, where the hero is sinking on the deck in perfect toilette, at the height of a bloody conflict, while every soldier or sailor is grouped around him, each in heroic attitude and spotless garments. It is this Tolstoï quality—the real tumult and tatters of the thing itself—which amazes the reader of Crane's novel. Moreover, Tolstoï had been through it all in person; whereas this author is a youth of twenty-four, it seems, born since the very last shot fired in the Civil War. How did he hit upon his point of view?

Yet this very point of view, strange to say, has been called a defect. Remember that he is telling the tale, not of a commanding general, but of a common soldier—a pawn in the game; a man who sees only what is going on immediately around him, and, for the most

part, has the key to nothing beyond. This he himself knows well at the time. Afterward, perhaps, when the affair is discussed at the camp-fire, and his view compared with what others say, it begins to take shape, often mixed with all sorts of errors; and when it has reached the Grand Army Post and been talked over afterward for thirty years, the narrator has not a doubt of it all. It has become a perfectly ordered affair, a neat and well-arranged game of chess, often with himself as a leading figure. Such is the result of too much perspective. The wonder is that this young writer, who had no way of getting at the facts except through the gossip—printed or written—of these very old soldiers, should be able to go behind them all, and give an account of their life, not only more vivid than they themselves have ever given, but more accurate. It really seems a touch of that marvellous intuitive quality which for want of a better name we call genius.

Now is it a correct criticism of the book to complain, as one writer has done, that it does not dwell studiously on the higher aspects of the war? Let the picture only be well drawn, and the moral will take care of itself; never fear. The book is not a patriotic tract, but a

delineation; a cross section of the daily existence of the raw enlisted-man. In other respects it is reticent because it is truthful. Does any one suppose that in the daily routine of the camp there was room for much fine talk about motives and results—that men were constantly appealing, like Carlyle's Frenchman, "to posterity and the immortal Gods?" Fortunately or unfortunately, the Anglo-Saxon is not built that way; he errs on the other side; habitually understates instead of overstating his emotions; and while he is making the most heroic sacrifices of his life, usually prefers to scold about rations or grumble at orders. He is to be judged by results; not by what he says, which is often ungracious and unornamental, but by what he does.

The very merit of this book is that in dealing with his men the author offers, within this general range, all the essential types of character—the man who boasts and the man who is humble—the man who thinks he may be frightened and is not, and the man who does not expect to be, but is. For his main character he selects a type to be found in every regiment—the young man who does not know himself, who first stumbles into cowardice, to his own amazement, and then is equally amazed

at stumbling into courage; who begins with skulking, and ends by taking a flag. In Doyle's *Micah Clarke* the old Roundhead soldier tells his grandchildren how he felt inclined to bob his head when he first heard bullets whistle, and adds, "If any soldier ever told you that he did not, the first time that he was under fire, then that soldier is not a man to trust." This is putting it too strongly, for some men are born more stolid, others more nervous; but the nervous man is quite as likely to have the firmer grain, and to come out the more heroic in the end. In my own limited experience, the only young officer whom I ever saw thoroughly and confessedly frightened, when first under fire, was the only one of his regiment who afterwards chose the regular army for his profession, and fought Indians for the rest of his life.

As for *The Red Badge of Courage*, the test of the book is in the way it holds you. I only know that whenever I take it up I find myself reading it over and over, as I do Tolstoï's *Cossacks*, and find it as hard to put down. None of Doyle's or Weyman's books bear re-reading, in the same way; you must wait till you have forgotten their plots. Even the slipshod grammar seems a part of the breathless life and

action. How much promise it gives, it is hard to say. Goethe says that as soon as a man has done one good thing, the world conspires against him to keep him from doing another. Mr. Crane has done one good thing, not to say two; but the conspiracy of admiration may yet be too much for him.

(1896.)

VI

LOWELL'S CLOSING YEARS IN CAMBRIDGE

MR. SMALLEY'S recent paper in *Harper's Weekly* on "Mr. Lowell in England" is one so thoroughly delightful and instructive that it is, perhaps, to be ranked even above the volumes of English reminiscence by the same author — volumes which Lowell was always ready to praise, and his presentation copy of which he bequeathed expressly to the Cambridge Public Library. They show, as does this magazine paper, those especial qualities of trained style which have been familiar to Americans for so many years in the great English weeklies; the clearness, the terseness, the practised ease of execution, the level quality of excellence, as if one remarkably clever man wrote them all. This makes it the more worth while to take exception to one single point in the portrait—where Mr. Smalley is tempted to generalize just a little beyond his own knowl-

edge, in pronouncing on the whole life of a man whom he had personally known for less than half that life. It is this point and this only which I should venture to criticise.

Mr. Smalley says of Lowell: "He came to London the man he had been all his life long . . . a thinker, a dreamer, a poet, almost a recluse." But for the phrase "all his life long" this would be very true; yet he certainly was not born a recluse, nor did he begin his career like one. As for birth and inheritance, his mother had Irish blood in her, and had, by the descriptions of those who knew her, the Irish temperament—gay, warm-hearted, impulsive, social—all these being qualities which her son inherited. From his father he had a more strenuous quality; but the Rev. Dr. Lowell was a man of sufficiently mild clericalism to preach sermons only fifteen minutes long, and this in a Congregational pulpit. He had, moreover, a sense of humor, for no one without it would have finally silenced a woman made garrulous by bereavement, and steadfastly refusing all consolation—"But, after all, my dear madam, what do you expect to do about it?" Lowell did not, therefore, inherit recluse qualities. As a school-boy he was the gayest of the gay. In college he was the wit of his

class; and my college diary records him as coming as a senior into our freshman debating club and keeping us supplied with amusement for the whole evening. It is enough to say that he was secretary of the Hasty Pudding Club—the reverse of a recluse position—and kept its records in verse. After leaving college he and Maria White were the "King and Queen" of what was probably the most brilliant circle of young people—the "Brother and Sister" club—ever brought together in the neighborhood of Boston.

After his marriage, too, Elmwood became the scene of a modest but delightful hospitality; for Mrs. Lowell had hosts of friends and loved to meet them. Eminent strangers were entertained there; Ole Bull, for instance, on his first arrival. Then followed by degrees the deaths of his older children, and the illness and death of his wife; then the sinking of Dr. Lowell into that sorrowful condition described in one of his son's most remarkable poems, "The Darkened Mind." It was the closing in of these shadows which changed for many years the life of Lowell, and made him, so far as he ever was, a recluse.

For a time it made a reaction which took him positively away from his early associations;

even, in a degree, from the antislavery movement, which had also helped, till then, to keep him from recluse habits. Unfortunately his second marriage, though a congenial and happy one, did not prevent this tendency; for the lady selected was not strongly social in her aptitudes, and, moreover, became herself an invalid. London life, indeed, came just in time for him. From this point Mr. Smalley's delineation is admirable, nothing could be truer or better; and even this partial modification of it would not be worth while were not the whole career of a man of genius deserving of much study, even in detail, lest it lead to mistaken generalizations. Instead of painting Lowell as a life-long recluse who was at last brought out of his shell by the delights and opportunities of London, he is rather to be regarded as one naturally social and joyous in the highest degree, but whose life in that direction had been checked and was resumed. It was not, in short, a case of tardy, but of interrupted development.

That he gained vastly in the power of self-repression and of mutual deference by going to London is unquestionable. It is the best thing taught to Americans by the admirable discipline of the dinner-tables of that city,

that we unlearn the habit of monologue. No one needed this more than Lowell, except perhaps Holmes; the two had sat at opposite ends of the table so long, during the early dinners of *Atlantic* contributors, and practically monopolized the talk. As to the quality of conversation in London, they found none better than their own; but they learned—at least, Lowell did—the value of half-rations. Perhaps Mr. Smalley presses too far the novelty that Lowell found in a circle where there were others besides men of letters; for in truth he had around him just such a circle, so far as it went, at home. Among his intimate friends and club-fellows were great capitalists, like John M. Forbes; men of the world, like Tom Appleton; lawyers and public men, like Judge Hoar; men of science, like Agassiz; physicians like his own brother-in-law, Dr. Estes Howe. The difference was not in quality so much as in quantity. Lowell could not perhaps say, like Stuart Newton the painter: "I meet in London occasionally such company as I meet in Boston all the time;" but he could at least go so far as to say that at home he met a sufficient variety of types to know that men of letters did not monopolize the world. When it came to sheer quantity, of

course London was overpowering; it was like going from a small preparatory school to Oxford; but, after all, a man usually finds, in looking back, that his own schoolmates afforded him a microcosm of the world.

Lowell, fortunately, lived to refute very promptly the ignorant pity bestowed upon him in advance by Matthew Arnold, for returning home, after the intoxication of his life in England, to live in Elmwood. Mr. Arnold never in his life had one glimpse of what America is to an American; and those who best knew Lowell had no such fear as this. The first pang over, created by the return to his changed home, and he slipped into his old associations as easily as into a familiar garment. Never was he more delightful than in those later fireside years, even when the fireside had come to be a part of a sick-room. Indeed, he was more agreeable than ever before; his habit of mind was more genial; he was less imperious, more moderate in his judgments—in short, more mellow. He liked to talk of London, as he liked to go there, but without a trace of self-consciousness or conceit; he could discourse delightfully about it, but so he could of Madrid—in fact, of Philadelphia or Chicago. He rejoiced to meet old neighbors,

to pick up old threads; and began immediately to accumulate new anecdotes about the old Cambridge. He delighted to tell how, on the day before the last Fourth of July, an early contemporary, in somewhat humbler life, had come to him to appeal for still another comrade who had habitually drifted into evil ways and was lodged in the East Cambridge jail. "Now, Mr. Lowell, I know you wouldn't want that boy, that Cambridge boy, to spend Independence Day in jail! I know you'll just bail him out." Lowell promptly did so, though knowing well that his beneficiary would devote the Fourth of July to qualifying himself for returning to jail again, which was precisely what happened. So, in other forms more satisfying, he took up the dropped threads of his life, receiving the Dante Club and the Modern Language Association as if each were the Royal Society. In looking back on London, too, he was able to see its limitations as well as its delights; was ready to recognize the barren fig-tree side of it, in Lord Houghton's phrase; the limitation and disappointment resulting from the very excess and hurry. It is the same side that we see in books of personal recollections, like Lady Eastlake's *Diaries* or Sir Frederick Pollock's *Remembrances*, where

the writer goes from one brilliant breakfast or luncheon or dinner to the next, meeting all the wits and sages, and bringing away only two or three anecdotes. Lowell himself recognized all this limitation, yet delighted in the retrospect; skimmed for you the cream of it, and then took you out on the piazza to watch the squirrels and robins. Becoming again, in some sense, a recluse, he was such a recluse as Sir Henry Wotton might have been, or as the tenant of Andrew Marvell's garden.

(1896.)

VII

"A VERY MORAL AND NICE BOOK"

IT was once the good-fortune of the present writer to read, in the Island of Fayal, a letter just written by a young lady of Portuguese-English birth who had been reading the New Testament for the first time. It was worth while to see such a letter, for many persons must have felt, first or last, with Thoreau, that it would be a delightful thing for any one to encounter those wonderful narratives as a fresh discovery, in maturer years, apart from all the too familiar associations of Sunday-school and sermon. Such was, at any rate, this young lady's experience, and her statement of the result was at least a little astonishing. She wrote, in her half-foreign English, to an American friend in these words: "Did you ever happen to read a book called the New Testament? If not, I advise you to do so. I have just been reading it one of

these days, and I find it a very moral and nice book."

It is not given to a veteran author like Mr. Andrew Lang to afford his readers many experiences of an engaging frankness like this; yet he has come nearer to it than might have been expected. It seems that, he having rashly undertaken the enterprise of editing the novels of Sir Walter Scott, it occurred to him very properly that it might be well to read them; and as *The Betrothed* happened to be next on the list, he has just read that for the first time, and thinks well of it. The feat itself is perhaps not so very extraordinary. On inquiry at a large public library, it appears that there are very few American children of tolerably intelligent families who have not accomplished the same enterprise by the age of fourteen. At any rate, the editor of the new edition of Scott's novels has achieved it, and is prepared to pronounce, of his own knowledge, that he finds *The Betrothed* to be a very moral and nice book. Now we get used in this country, and, indeed, in the English-speaking world, to very curious limitations of what is called culture. Mr. Smalley describes an English lady "of great social position" who had never heard of Matthew

Arnold until the time when his death was announced. When the present writer inquired of the late Mr. Froude, twenty years ago, about his neighbor in London, the late Kenelm H. Digby, author of that delightful book *The Broad Stone of Honor*, the historian proved never to have heard of either the man or the book. A friend of mine, visiting Stoke Pogis last year, had pointed out to her by the verger the grave of "the American poet, Thomas Gray." A young English girl of eighteen, just arrived in this country, and looking at the name of Thackeray on my book-shelf, remarked, "He is one of your American novelists, is he not?" And a well-known Canadian statesman told me that a London maiden had just made to him a similar remark about Tennyson. Yet the least probable of these anecdotes, or the joint improbability of all put together, is brought within the domain of reasonable credibility by the announcement that Mr. Lang is just reading the Waverley Novels, or any one of them, for the first time.

For this author, it must be remembered, is proud to proclaim himself a child of the Tweed; and though his severest foes, like Mr. Robert Buchanan, may pronounce him "a

cockney of cockneys," they are compelled to admit in the same breath that he is a Scotchman. Now if to be a Scotchman is not to be brought up on the Waverley Novels, to have drunk them in, every one of them, with one's early breath, what is the advantage in having been a child of the Tweed at all? One might as well have been born an Australian, or even an American. Even these humbler beings can at least read Scott. The present writer counts it among the joys of his life that he remembers the actual birth of the last two novels of the great series; and that he stoutly declared, with the omnivorous appetite of boyhood, that *Count Robert of Paris*, and even *Castle Dangerous*, were as delightful as all their predecessors. He would have walked ten miles gladly — and so would any of his companions—to reach some blissful spot where there was to be found a Waverley Novel (as, for instance, *The Betrothed*) still unread. What an *embarras des richesses* must have surrounded Mr. Andrew Lang, that he should have lived fifty years in the world and only just bethought himself of reading this book for the first time! It is fortunate that he now kindly pronounces it to be, in some respects, "noble and moving"; in fact, "a moral and nice book."

What enhances the zest of the affair is that, while Mr. Lang thus leaves his Scott thus insufficiently read, he yet holds his neighbor of the Tweed as a rod over the head of any luckless modern writer who dares to criticise him. Mr. Howells cannot so much as venture the remark that good Sir Walter's opening chapter of genealogy is sometimes a little long-winded, and that it may be permissible to begin with Chapter Second, but he rouses Mr. Lang's utmost indignation. Mr. Haggard cannot be classed as a dime novelist without protests of amazement and assurances that he is the lineal successor of Scott, and that to have left unread a single story of Haggard's is to have fallen short of the highest culture. Omit, if you will, the

> "Widowed wife and wedded maid,
> Betrothed, betrayer, and betrayed,"

but read every word about *She*—if the phrase be not ungrammatical—or you are lost. It is painful, but really Mr. Lang's confessions recall the case of that New England bookseller in a small town who recently informed an inquirer that he had never heard of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, but that he was probably the husband of Mrs. Mary J. Holmes, who wrote such lovely novels.

(1896)

VIII

LOCAL FICTION

THE writer can remember when people habitually spoke of the Waverley Novels as "the Scotch novels," and now we all speak of the Scotch novels again. It is a refreshing bit of sanity, after various literary whims and extremes, to find a bit of wholesome local life, such as Ian Maclaren gives us, holding its own month after month in popularity at the book-stalls. There has been a curious analogy in the experience of Scottish and New England fiction. Both representing a rugged soil and a severely simple life, with a dialect supposed in both cases to be wholly unavailable for fiction, both have turned out to represent a nearly inexhaustible material—more available, in each case, the more it was worked. This is probably the case with any soil, at least any which is tolerably homogeneous and simple. The deeper you dig, the more you find.

Probably any one village would afford material for a whole series of Waverley Novels, could it only be thoroughly explored. But at the same time the description must not be mere description; it must reach those deep springs of human motive which are the same everywhere. Aiming at this, and in sympathy with these strong motives, each author will find something of his own. No two Scotch parishes are alike, at least if one is painted by Barrie and the other by Ian Maclaren; nor any three New England hamlets if painted respectively by Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins, and Alice Brown. Miss Jewett will find in hers an element of higher breeding and more refined living. Her people will be more influenced by sentiment, perhaps sometimes too much so. Miss Wilkins's people will be wonders of keen delineation, but their life will be grim—sometimes too grim. Undoubtedly the whole life of New England seems to all English readers much more stern and sombre than it is, because of her delineations; just as all Americans form a highly exaggerated impression of the good looks of the English people because of Du Maurier's pictures in *Punch*. The latest New England story-teller, Miss Alice Brown, is in a fair way to rank as the best

of the three, because the widest, mellowest, and most genial. Her tales smack of the soil in the last degree, and yet leave an impression of wholesome enjoyment of life. In fact, one of her favorite adverbs is "happily"—"Miss Lucinda went happily along."

Probably all these authors have had the curious experience, common to all realistic artists, of first creating their types out of the imagination, and then hearing of real people who have done just the things which the writers had assumed that they would do. The late Rev. Dr. Andrew P. Peabody once stopped me in the street to ask if Miss Wilkins had not lived in girlhood in a certain Massachusetts village, which he mentioned, but of which I had never heard. I doubted the fact, but he was very confident that it was so. He had, it seems, attended school in that village, and had found in her stories several legends which he had heard there as a boy. Telling this afterwards to the lady herself, I was assured that she had never been near the place, and had scarcely even heard of it. Miss Alice Brown, writing her delightful sketch called "Heart's-ease," describes Miss Lucinda, who, after a lifetime of bondage to her stern father, the Judge, is released by his death, and plunges

immediately into the wild delights, before prohibited, of riding on horseback and wearing flowers in her bonnet. Miss Brown, after writing this, heard for the first time of another maiden lady—also the daughter of a very repressive judge—who celebrated a similar emancipation by immediately taking music lessons and studying French, she having been prohibited these indulgences up to the age of fifty. In the same way, since she imagined the two old ladies in the almshouse who divided their joint room by a chalk-line and made calls on each other, she is said to have encountered old ladies who could name the very house where the thing occurred; and after writing "Told in the Poorhouse," she was informed that the estranged couple were still living. In truth, the writer of realistic fiction must boldly write not merely what has been actually seen, but what might have been seen—as the artist Stuart painted for the newly enriched Irishman the ancestors he ought to have had.

In the course of time, by studying faithfully any type of character, we learn more and more about it, and can eclipse all earlier pictures by greater truthfulness. Cooper bewitched the world by his heroic and imaginative Indian

braves; then for years it was the custom to deride his Indians as utterly fictitious creations. Now comes Alice Fletcher, and by the arduous process of living among the Indians, studying their rites, and learning their traditions, shows them to have been, in the original and unspoiled condition, more imaginative, more picturesque, more worthy of study, than any Indians of whom Cooper dreamed. The labors of many authors, in all parts of our vast country, are gradually putting on record a wide range of local types. As a rule, however, it is the less educated classes which are more easily drawn, though not necessarily or always the most worth drawing. Hence we are acquiring a gallery of rustic groups spread over the continent, while the traditions of polish and refinement are ignored either for want of personal experience or of skill. Unluckily, the writer who has succeeded with village life always wishes to deal with more artificial society. It is as inevitable as the yearning of every good amateur comedian to act Shakespeare. Bret Harte and his successor, Hamlin Garland, handle admirably the types they knew in early life, but the moment they attempt to delineate a highly bred woman the curtain rises on a creaking doll in

starched petticoats. Few, indeed, of our authors can venture to portray, what would seem not so impossible, an every-day gentleman or lady. But Miss Jewett can produce types of the old New England gentry, dwelling perhaps in the quietest of country towns, yet incapable of any act which is not dignified or gracious; and Miss Viola Roseboro can depict an old Southern lady, living in a cheap New York boarding-house, toiling her life away to pay her brother's or her father's debts, and yet so exquisite in all her ways that the very page which describes her seems to exhale a delicate odor as of faded jasmine.

(1896.)

IX

THE NEW SPELLING-BOOK

IT is said that a certain literary household was rather taken by surprise the other day at the statement of a perhaps over-vehement brother author, to the effect that "only half-baked prigs" now use the full forms of verbal expressions—such as "I do not," "Have we not," and the like. All reasonable persons, according to this authority, say "don't" and "haven't," and the press should follow the practice. To this anecdote the husband is said meekly to have remarked that he frequently used these phrases, although he had certainly lived long enough to be a thoroughly baked prig, if a prig at all. "Oh no," said his sympathetic spouse, herself a writer, "you don't use those phrases; at least I do not think you do." She thus, with feminine fidelity, established herself, without knowing it, in the same category of prigs with her husband. She too,

as soon as she spoke earnestly and seriously, said "I do not" instead of "I don't." Probably most people would do the same, although doubtless the eminent author quoted must know his own habits best. My own observation has been that, in or out of the world of prigs, a more serious occasion usually brings with it the more ample and dignified phrase. Nobody used the contracted forms of speech more freely than Wendell Phillips, who was, indeed, often censured for it by the more formal and academical.

He did not hesitate to say *don't* and *can't*, but no one rolled out the full impressiveness of the uncontracted phrase with more power when the occasion came. In perhaps the noblest series of accumulated climaxes to be found in all his orations—his celebrated comparison between War and Slavery—when the wave breaks at last and is ending, "Tell me where is the battle-field that is not white—white as an angel's wing—compared with the blackness of that darkness which has brooded over the Carolinas for centuries?"—it is observable that he says "where is"; it would have broken the whole force of the wave to say "where's." Yet Phillips was not usually characterized as a prig, and had at least been

long enough under fire to have become a well-baked one. I should dispute entirely the accusation that at the most earnest and impressive moments of life men resort to "don't" and "isn't." When, as the bugle sounded for General Humphreys' charge at Fredericksburg, that accomplished soldier turned to his staff and remarked, with uncovered head, as if inviting them to be seated round his table, "Gentlemen, I shall head this charge; I presume, of course, you will wish to ride with me," would the efficacy of the call have been enhanced by his saying "I'll" and "you'll"? Colonel McClellan, in his *Life of Humphreys*, tells the story, and reminds us that of the seven who thus rode with their chief, one of them being his own son, five were dismounted and four wounded before the charge was ended. The appeal, therefore, whatever its form, seems to have answered its purpose.

These matters may, however, be left to natural instinct, which will lead us correctly enough. As to the movement now going on in various quarters for the simplification of English spelling, it is one in which, if guided by competent scholars, all who wish well to their race may join. Why should English spelling alone remain unchanged in its chaos, when

French and German spelling are undergoing changes all the time? Nay, we could not keep it thus if we would, since the very London printers who are most exasperated against the omission of the *u* from valor would be still more displeased if they had to spell the mother-tongue as all good London printers were obliged to spell it a hundred years ago. Then they would have spelled "pie" *pye* and "lie" *lye*, and, on the other hand, they would have given "rhyme" as *rime;* they would have used the words *stoick*, *classick*, *topick*, *comick*, *critick*, *publick*, all with the final *k*. Dr. Johnson, in writing his celebrated story *Rasselas*, gave the name of Imlac to one of his characters purposely, that by ending it with a *c* he could make it as unlike as possible to an English word, which should always, he says, "have the Saxon *k* added to the *c*." Boswell, the biographer of Johnson, tells this, and adds, in a note, "I hope the authority of the great master of our language will stop that curtailing innovation by which we see 'critic,' 'public,' etc., frequently written instead of *critick*, *publick*, etc." This was about a hundred years ago, and now the curtailing innovation has not left one vestige of the precious "Saxon *k*" behind it, and you may vainly search

all recent London imprints for the word *pye* as the name of an eatable. Mrs. Stowe was the latest American author, so far as I know, who employed this last spelling (so an editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* told me), in her manuscript forty years ago.

How have these great changes been brought about? Sometimes by open protest, but more often by the silent acquiescence of sensible people in some obvious simplification of spelling. The revolution which is now banishing the *u* from words ending in *or* is the same in kind with that which dethroned the Anglo-Saxon *k*. It is only that, as it happens to have made more headway in this country, it is called an American innovation. The delightful English Roman Catholic author Digby wrote, fifty years ago, that the moderns had found out a new way to spell "honor," but no new mode of practising it; and this furnishes a date for this particular reform, although it really dates back much earlier, being mentioned with approval in Pegge's "Anecdotes," first published in 1803. In the books of a hundred years ago one might find, without question or misgiving, *authour*, *errour*, *inferiour*, *humour*, and *honour*. The last two still hold their own in English books, but not

in American; the others have given way in England also. The only word of the kind still retaining the *u* in most American books is the word *Saviour*, and this is obviously from a feeling of reverence, like that which leads many excellent persons to pronounce "God" *Gawd*, just as Kipling's soldiers pronounce it. In time we shall perhaps learn that true feeling and reverence are not impaired by a simple pronunciation or by a consistent spelling.

(1896)

X

FAVORITES OF A DAY

"CRITICISM on English writers," wrote Edward Fitzgerald to Mrs. Kemble, "is likely to be more impartial across the Atlantic and not biased by clubs, coteries, etc." True as this is, the fact must also be borne in mind that the American critic is always limited by knowing that what he writes will probably not be read in England, and therefore will not reach the persons most concerned. It is not strange if the English author judges America by his balance-sheet, since it is his only point of contact with our readers. The late Mr. Du Maurier had reason to think well of a public that yielded him $50,000; and though it was freely declared here that his style was meretricious, his theme dubious, his title borrowed from Nodier, his group of three Englishmen from Dumas, and his heroine, pretty feet and all, from Delvaux's *Les Amours Buissonières*—

all this naturally did not trouble him, particularly as it never reached him. In the same way the authors who have come here to lecture have inevitably gauged each place by their own audiences; as Matthew Arnold thought that Worcester, Massachusetts, must be a small and trivial town because he had but few to hear him, and was left at a hotel, but regarded Haverhill as a great and promising city, because he was entertained at a private house and had a good audience. The trade-wind of prestige and influence still blows from Europe hither; the American author does not expect money from England, for instance, but values its praise or blame; while the Englishman is glad of the money, but cares little for the criticism, since he rarely sees it.

What is hard for authors, foreign or native, to understand is that fame is apt to be most transitory where it is readiest, and that they should make hay while the sun shines. A year ago the bookseller's monthly returns, as seen in *The Bookman* and elsewhere, gave the leadership in the sales of every American city to English or Scotch books; now one sees the recent American tales by Hopkinson Smith or Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, for example, leading in every town. There is

no deep national principle involved—only a casual change, like that which takes athletic prizes for a few years from one college and gives them to another. Novels and even whole schools of fiction emerge and disappear like the flash or darkening of a revolving light in a light-house; you must use the glimpse while you have it. "The highways of literature are spread over," says Holmes, "with the shells of dead novels, each of which has been swallowed at a mouthful by the public, and is done with." Each foreign notability, in particular, should bear in mind on his arrival the remark of Miss Berry's Frenchman about a waning beauty who was declared by her to be still lovely. "Yes; but she has only a quarter of an hour to be so" ("*Elle n'a qu'un quart d'heure pour l'être*").

The bulk of English fiction fortunately never reaches this country, and the bulk of American fiction as fortunately never reaches England. The exceptions are often wayward and very often inexplicable. Who can now understand why the forgotten novel called *The Lamplighter* had a wider English circulation than any American book had hitherto conquered except *Uncle Tom's Cabin?* or why *The Wide, Wide World* achieved such a suc-

cess as still to retain its hold on English farmhouses? They were no better than the works of "a native author named Roe," and probably not so good. In this country the authors who have achieved the most astounding popular successes are, as a rule, now absolutely forgotten. I can remember when Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., received by far the largest salary then paid to any American writer, and Dr. J. H. Robinson spent his life in trying to rival him. The vast evangelical constituency which now reads *Ben-Hur* then read Ingraham's *Prince of the House of David;* the boys who now pore over "Oliver Optic" had then Mayne Reid. Those who enjoy Gunter and Albert Ross then perused, it is to be presumed, the writings of Mr. J. W. Buel, whose very name will be, to most readers of today, unknown. His *Beautiful Story* reached a sale of nearly 300,000 copies in two years; his *Living World* and *The Story of Man* were sold to the number of nearly 250,000 each, and were endorsed by Gladstone and Bismarck. This was only ten years ago, for in 1888 he received for copyright $33,000, and in 1889 $50,000; yet I have at hand no book of reference or library catalogue that contains his name. Is it not better to be unknown in one's lifetime, and yet live forever by one poem, like Blanco

White with his sonnet called "Life and Light," or by one saying, like Fletcher of Saltoun with his "I care not who makes the laws of a people, so I can make its ballads," than to achieve such evanescent splendors as this?

It is not more than sixty years since Maria Edgeworth rivalled Scott in English and American popularity, and Scott's publisher, James Ballantyne, says that he could most gratify the author of *Waverley* when he could say: "Positively this is equal to Miss Edgeworth." Fifty years ago Frederika Bremer's works were in English-speaking countries the object of such enthusiasm that publishers quarrelled for the right to reproduce them in English, and old friendships were sundered by the competition to translate them. At that time all young men who wished for a brilliant social career still took for their models either *Pelham* or *Vivian Grey;* and I remember that a man of fine intellect, who had worked in a factory till he was eighteen, once told me that he had met with no intellectual influence to be compared with that exerted upon him by Bulwer's novels. The historical tales of G. P. R. James were watched for by thousands of eager readers, and his solitary horseman rode through the opening page among the plaudits of a

myriad hearts. Dickens laughed all these away, as Cervantes smiled away Spain's chivalry; and now Dickens himself is set aside by critics as boisterous in his fun and maudlin in his sentiment. All teaches us that fame is, in numberless cases, the most fleeting of all harvests; that it is, indeed, like parched corn, which must be eaten while it is smoking hot or not at all.

If, however, an author holds his public by virtue of his essential thought, rather than by his mode of utterance, he may achieve the real substance of fame, although his very name be forgotten, because that thought may transfuse other minds. Many men, like Channing and Parker, make their views so permeate the thoughts of their time that, while their books pass partially out of sight, their work goes on. Five different reprints of Channing's *Self-Culture* appeared in London in a single year; and the English issue of Parker's works remains the only complete one. Again, writers of equal ability may vary immensely in their power of producing quotable passages on which their names may float. No one can help noticing the number of pages occupied by Pope, for instance, in every dictionary of quotations—a number quite out of proportion

to his real ability or fame. The same was formerly true of Young's *Night Thoughts* and Thomson's *Seasons*, now rarely opened. Many of the most potent thinkers, on the other hand, are in the position of that General Clive, once famous for his wealth and gorgeous jewelry, whom Walpole excused for alleged parsimony on the ground that he probably had about him "no small brilliants."

In these various ways a man sometimes escapes, perhaps forever, from the personal renown that should seemingly be his. Even if he gains this, how limited it is, at the best! Strictly speaking, there is no literary fame worth envying, save Shakespeare's—and Shakespeare's amounted to this, that Addison wrote *An Account of the Greatest English Poets* in which his name does not appear; and that, of the people one meets in the streets of any city, the majority will not even have heard of him.

"How many thousand never heard the name
Of Sidney or of Spenser, and their books;
And yet brave fellows, and presume of fame,
And think to bear down all the world with looks."

Happy is that author, if such there be, who, although his renown be as small as that of

Thoreau in his lifetime, does not greatly concern himself about it, being so occupied with some great thought or hope for man that his own renown is a matter of slight importance. It is for this that Whittier always expressed thanks to the antislavery agitation, because it kept him free from the narrowness of a merely literary ambition. The only absolutely impregnable attitude is in that fine invocation of the radical Proudhon, prefixed to his first work:

"Thou God who hast placed in my heart the sentiment of justice before my reason comprehended it, hear my ardent prayer. . . . May my memory perish, if humanity may but be free!"—("Ah! périsse ma mémoire et que l'humanité soit libre.") *

He who is thinking only of himself and of the royalty on his books must watch tremblingly over his own fame, and shudder at every adverse breath; he is like an actor, who hears his doom in every shrinkage of applause from the galleries. But the man whose thoughts are fixed on truth and right is better occupied; if he sees the torch carried onward, what matter who carries it? "Still lives the

* *Œuvres Complètes*, I. 224.

song though Regnar dies"; and it will not trouble him though a generation of critics go to their graves, as Lady Holland said of Lady Cork, "full of bitterness and good dinners."

(1896.)

XI

THE FOE TO ELOQUENCE

IT is a curious fact that the greatest foe to eloquence, just now, is that same enterprising daily press which at first did so much to promote it. It is not merely that the press secures a better-informed community, although this has been sometimes thought to be less favorable to good public speaking than a more ignorant body of hearers. A Southern justice of the Supreme Court once told the present writer that there could be no really good oratory in a well-educated region; it could only be developed where the mass of people depended almost wholly on the orator for instruction. This opinion is probably not well founded; it is probable that the better education simply shifts the grade of the oratory, and does not impair it. Demosthenes and Pericles did not address an ignorant public, but one highly trained. Nevertheless, on the

only occasion when the present writer ever addressed a typically Southern rural audience —at the Spartansburg, South Carolina, celebration, in 1881—it was impossible not to be struck with a certain eagerness in the whole body of hearers, a sort of greediness, it might almost be said, to reach all that was to be had from the speakers, beyond anything ordinarily to be found at the North or West. It was an attitude and bearing hardly compatible with the general reading of a daily paper. So far, indeed, it illustrated what Mr. Justice —— had said; and yet it is doubtful, as has been already remarked, whether his opinion was quite correct.

The way in which the daily press operates as an obstacle to good public speaking is quite different from this. When the art of verbatim reporting was first brought to perfection, the reports became so admirable as to be a great encouragement to the orator. It was a perfect delight for him to see the thoughts which had perhaps never even been written out appear in type before his eyes. It was a wonder, like the phonograph. The same thing sometimes occurs now, but only rarely, and often by special arrangement. The daily press now attempts so much, has such a vast variety of

news to be served up in every number, that it must choose the easiest way to meet the demand. Now the easiest method is not to report a public address, in any proper sense, at all, but simply to call upon each public speaker to write out in advance what he means to say, and print it, often much curtailed, from his manuscript. This is accordingly what is more and more done. When any public demonstration of sufficient importance occurs—a meeting, or even a dinner—each person announced as a speaker for it knows that he will receive calls from reporters, or a letter from the Associated Press, requesting "a copy of his speech." It is a kind proposal, but it seems to assume that there is no such thing as spontaneity or freshness left in public oratory. If he is a practised speaker the chances are that he does not yet know what he is going to say; that he will depend largely on the interest of the occasion, the atmosphere of the audience, the lead given by other speakers. It is, at any rate, certain that the more he is guided by these things the fresher and more animated his speech will be. If he prepares ever so much, the chances are that the best things in his speech will have come to him on the spur of the moment. This, indeed, is what

public speaking means; it is not public speaking, properly so called, when one reads from a manuscript, and hardly such when a man recites what has been committed to memory. Yet it is the present tendency of press methods to banish all other oratory except this.

It may be laid down as a general rule that the things which were most effective with an audience on a given occasion are rarely reported by the press; for the press follows more and more the cut-and-dried method. This method discourages the speaker. He knows in advance that either he must write for the journals of next morning or else speak for the audience of that evening; it is becoming more and more difficult to do both. If he writes out his speech, and knows it to be in type, the freshness of the special adaptation is gone; he no longer talks with his audience as man to man. All is premeditated; he cannot avail himself of the glow of the moment, of the happy opportunity given by some passing incident. On the other hand, if he yields to these last desires, and deals at first hand with his hearers, he knows almost with certainty that his speech will either be dismissed unreported—which is not so bad—or will be given only in a few phrases caught haphaz-

ard, and possibly quite reversing his line of thought. He has his choice; he can rarely have both. The only possible compromise is that which the present writer has sometimes adopted — to write out one speech for the press, and then make, if needful, a wholly different one. But this involves a double trouble, besides the incidental objection that it does not seem quite honest.

There is no doubt that the pleasantest societies for discussion are those in which reporting is strictly prohibited, because all reporting tends inevitably to the cut-and-dried, and drives out the freshness of off-hand speaking. It has been admitted for years at Harvard University that the speaking at the Commencement dinner, which is always elaborately reported, is far less animated and brilliant than that at the Phi Beta Kappa dinner, which takes place the next day, commonly with some of the very same speakers, and is never reported at all. In this last case the speakers are talking to their hearers; in the other case they have usually written out their views for the benefit of the daily paper. The Round Table Club of Boston has maintained, with almost unvarying success for many years, its monthly discussions on social and literary

topics—debates which have never yet been reported; while the old Radical Club in the same city, which was in its day as vivacious and animated, was practically killed at last by reporting. Not that the men and women who speak at such clubs have anything to conceal, but the essential difficulty is always the same. If you are talking for the newspapers you are sure to be misunderstood unless you write out what you mean to say, and if you do that, farewell to all freshness and spontaneity.

It is not intended in all this to throw blame upon the daily papers. They have a stupendous task, which they perform with amazing energy and method as regards quantity of information, and perhaps in time they will add accuracy also. Having on any given evening a score of public meetings to report, how can they do it, it may justly be asked, unless the speakers do their own reporting in advance? Nevertheless, it is likely that sooner or later some device or new invention will lead us out of the difficulty. Who knows but some future poly-phonograph may at some day reproduce in the daily papers of the next morning all that any public speaker said which was worth saying, or really told upon his audience, and may omit, with still greater felicity, all the rest?

(1896)

XII

THE NEXT STEP IN JOURNALISM

IT is notorious that every one who does not edit a daily newspaper feels entitled to give advice to those who exercise that high function. The present writer, at any rate, has long held that a great revolution in journalism—or, at least, a great step in its evolution —must yet occur. Clearly the process of simply gathering the news, such as it is, has almost approached perfection; it seems impossible to carry it much further than the point which the metropolitan press has already attained. The next point attempted must certainly be that indicated by the old Scotch song,

"But are ye sure the news is true?"

It is inevitable that in time we should aim at quality as well as quantity; at accuracy as well as amount. The old rustic objurgation

in New England, "Yer don't know nothin', and what yer du know yer don't know sartin," is no longer applicable in full. Nobody can now apply the first half to the daily press; but the last half is as applicable as ever. The larger the newspaper, the greater seems the deficiency on this point. It is not a question of wilful falsehood, which is perhaps rare, but we simply see an art which has reached a certain point, and is yet to be developed further.

I asked a very successful newspaper correspondent during the civil war why he found it necessary to describe himself as having personally witnessed two events which had happened at the same moment eight miles apart. He answered, very frankly, that such was the general rule of his profession, since it was found that nobody cared for second-hand information, and the public demanded that everything should be reported by an eye-witness. It is now many years since that incident, but the same rule appears yet to be maintained. In no other way, at least, can one account for the astounding minuteness and the marvellous inaccuracy of the information given. Any one who has occasion to look up a point of history through newspaper evidence will find that many things will forever remain abso-

lutely inscrutable from this very habit of correspondents. It is not merely that half a dozen persons will give wholly irreconcilable accounts of one event; that is to be expected, and if each would only say frankly that he was writing mere rumors, or the tales of "an intelligent eye-witness," it might be possible to deal with them by making proper allowances; but since each claims to have personally seen the fact he describes, the case is hopeless. No system of averages will apply. If one correspondent describes a certain hero as dying at sunrise, and another pictures him as breathing his last just as the evening star shines out, you cannot adjust the matter by killing him at high noon. But this habit of vicarious description did not disappear with the civil war; it is just as prevalent to-day in times of peace.

Let any one compare the references to himself or herself in the newspapers—and who is so humble as not to appear sometimes in the society columns?—and it will become evident that they not only are often wide of the truth, but are often so diametrically opposite as to destroy each other. You are in the city and in the country on the same day; you have sailed for Europe and are driving in a four-in-

hand among the Berkshire Hills. A gentleman with whom I should be well acquainted used to carry in his pocket two scraps cut within a fortnight from two metropolitan newspapers, the one describing him as a man without a gray hair in his head, and the other as a man possessing a remarkably fine head of snow-white locks. Should his biography ever be written, it is a matter of chance which description will come into the record as the unimpeachable testimony of an eye-witness. Even as this is written, the present writer turns to a newspaper column of personals, and finds that he is just returning from a place which he has never visited to another place where he has no intention of going. So constant is this sort of thing that he can lay his hand on his heart and testify that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the majority of statements that are made about him in the newspapers are not only erroneous as to details, but are made out of the whole cloth. On inquiry he finds it to be just the same with all his neighbors. The same witness already quoted receives frequently a cutting from different newspapers recently published, describing him as taking "a daily spin" on a tricycle to certain designated towns, with his

little daughter behind him, the fact being that neither of them has mounted a tricycle for years, nor did they ever visit in that way the towns specified.

Emerson somewhere describes a very shy man to whom it was always a pain that he must at any given moment be somewhere, but who was comforted by the thought of the inconceivable number of places where he was not. The present habit of the newspapers deprives us of all that innocent pleasure, since they may at any moment assign to us all these innumerable places at the same time. Cicero, who rejoiced that he was at a certain time so unimportant that he could mount his horse and ride a few miles out of Rome without anybody's noticing it, would lose all that privilege were he among us, for he would very likely be reported as on horseback, whether he was there or not. In one way this fictitious publicity, or publicity under fictitious circumstances, has its advantages, for if the newspapers sometimes report you to be where you would not have thought of going, they often do you the favor of recording you as present at some public function—a funeral, for instance —where you ought to be but are not. The friend already quoted tells me that this has

gradually begun to exert on him a demoralizing influence; if he attends on such an occasion, he avers, it is commonly left unmentioned; but if he fails to go, his name is apt to swell the list of persons present. Now, as on this semi-public occasion the great object is not to be there, but to be supposed to be there, the reporters secure for you that credit without exertion of your own.

The curious thing is that, no matter how irresponsible are the newspaper assertions about ourselves personally, we find it impossible not to put some faith in them when they relate to other people. Even when we know that we were not present, as reported, each of us assumes that everybody else was. We read the list of guests at some entertainment, and readily believe that all named as attending were actually there in the body, although we may have known a hundred instances where such lists were taken only from some hasty list, printed or written, of invited guests, some of whom might be at the time in Seattle or Venezuela. The cruel advantage of the reporter lies always in the intrinsic impressiveness of print, the product of an art which still retains something of the solemnity that belonged to it in the days when it was held to be magical.

It has its hold on the reporter himself, who often ends in not merely stoutly maintaining but actually believing his statement to be strictly true in all its parts as printed, although he knew well an hour ago in what a helter-skelter way it was picked up. If these little black imps called types can thus beguile the very most experienced, how shall the ignorant escape? Their power is irresistible. You may contradict a printed statement never so often, yet nobody sees the disclaimer, and the wise soon outgrow the habit of correction. Ere-long, perhaps, these despots of ours will grow humane from very mercy, and the journalist who ranks highest in his profession will not be he who presents the most facts, but the fewest falsehoods.

(1896)

LIFE

XIII

THE DREAM OF THE REPUBLIC

A QUESTION has lately come up which lies behind all other matters involved in either the Venezuelan or the South African question, and upon which all sensible men and women should form an opinion. Is there, after all, any advantage in living in a republic; and is it not better, in truth, to dwell in a colony, whose final control rests in some government a few thousand miles off, so that the colony will be well taken care of? How our grandparents or great-grandparents answered this question we know. They fought a seven years' war to get rid of being a colony. The question, however, is what we think of it now. And if an independent republic is better, does this apply in general, or only to people who speak English and are Protestants? Or, on the other hand, is it true of all people, at any rate of all Christian people, leaving others for the mo-

ment out of the question? Did all Central and Southern America, for instance, make a mistake when their successive states declared independence of various European nations and set up republics? Or would it have been better had they all remained as Cuba is—under the government of Spain?

It is very common to see just now, in religious newspapers and in letters from professors, an expression of sincere regret that the Spanish-American republics generally are not becoming colonies of England. They would, it is thought, be in that case much more happy and prosperous; would have better roads, more shops, stricter laws, would speak a more intelligible dialect, and be less superstitious. They would have gunboats to protect them; a great many people would come from England to live among them and teach them manners; they would have pale ale; and there would always be a home government to settle questions. Would not that be better than to live in their own way and have occasional revolutions?

It is a curious fact that, in spite of all these obvious advantages of the colonial condition, it finds least approval among the very people who ought best to know its value—the colo-

nists who go forth from Europe. Great Britain is, indeed, the only European nation which sends forth its children on a really enormous scale. Now, these self-exiled people ought clearly, if they know what is good for them, to seek out some English colony. These colonies are to be found all over the world; there is no habitable zone where a person or a family leaving Great Britain may not settle down and find atmosphere, food, employment, to suit every sort of taste; there is a vast and alluring assortment of colonial conditions provided always under the British flag. What is the result? The result is that, according to Sir Charles Dilke, "three times as many natives of the United Kingdom are living in the United States as in the whole of our [British] colonies put together."* "It is striking," he adds, "to how considerable an extent British emigration fails to follow the flag."

The verdict seems perfectly conclusive. There is evidently something in a self-governing republic which affords greater advantages for a desirable life than are found in colonies. Canada is, as Dilke points out, far more accessible to England than any other of its off-

* Dilke's *Problems of Greater Britain*, 1890, p. 17.

shoots; and yet all the resources of assisted emigration and subsidized railroads, though they can tempt natives of the United Kingdom there, cannot keep them there. If, now, those born in Great Britain itself prefer the life of the self-governing republic, why should not those also prefer it who had the misfortune to be born somewhere else—as, for instance, in Venezuela or in Mexico?

There remains only that general proposition, which Lowell satirized without mercy in his *Biglow Papers* fifty years ago, that all who do not speak English must needs be an inferior race, and that "Anglosaxondom's idee must break them all to pieces." Yet there was a time when Bolivar was a recognized hero throughout this continent for rescuing first Venezuela and then Peru from the Spanish dominion; and when he died, in 1830, his name was associated in the public voice with that of Washington. We are now told that the South American states are unstable as to government and have occasional wars. But it is hard for any government to seem more unstable than our own seemed in 1861; and we shed more blood in our own civil war than they in all their "revolutions" put together. Their population is characterized by Sir

Charles Dilke as "an active and intelligent mixed race of Spanish, Indian, and negro blood," with "an infusion of Italian, French, and Irish blood." "We must look forward to an eventual protectorate," he adds, "which, great as is the weight of the United States in the world, will bring to it an increase." *

These words, from the highest recognized English authority on such matters, may well make us pause and reflect whether we really desire to see these Hispano-American states exist as republics, and work out their own salvation; or whether we wish for them the probable fate of the Boer republic, as European colonies. Dr. Jameson, taking his way back to England nominally a prisoner, was immediately sung as a hero by the new poet-laureate, and came very near to being a petted lion in London society. It is a matter seriously to be considered by us whether it is best or not best that every Hispano-American state in America should have its Jameson. This at least may be said: The test of one's real love of liberty and of republican government is that one should not believe them to be the destiny of a single race or language only, but of all na-

* Dilke's *Problems of Greater Britain*, 1890, p. 98.

tions. Grant that the South Americans are impetuous, turbulent, unsettled; they are not more so than the mixed races whom the Roman Empire left on the British Isles when it withdrew from them. To this day there are no roads on those islands so good, no walls so solid, as those built by the Roman conquerors. Shall we say that it would have been better if Great Britain had remained forever an outlying colony of Rome? Not at all; she has worked out her own salvation by being thrown on herself, and so must these South American republics.

We did not require Maximilian to leave Mexico for fear he would not govern vigorously under the direction of his master, Louis Napoleon; but we required it in order that Mexico should be free. See what progress Mexico has made since then—first under Juarez, a pure-blooded Indian, and since 1877 under Diaz! Brigandage has almost disappeared; the laws are administered; there is religious freedom; the army has been reduced. Yet there was a time when the very word "Mexican" was a synonym for disorder. Even a Hispano-American race, it seems, can fulfil the dream of the republic.

(1896)

XIV

A DISTURBED CHRISTMAS

ONCE more this last Christmas-day the choirs sang of peace on earth and good-will to men. Then the guests at the Christmas dinner discussed with various opinions the possibilities and the ethics of war. Even now it seems we are not ready to give ourselves wholly to the works of peace. How dependent is our action, and even our moral standard, upon the circumstances of the time! All agree in denouncing the Sultan and his Kurds and Bashi-Bazouks, but we forget that these hardened offenders do nothing more than was habitually done, less than two centuries ago, by the foremost religious order of all Christendom — the Knights of St. John, first consecrated at Jerusalem to charity, humility, and chastity. Through the whole of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the city of Valetta, on the island of Malta, was a

mere slave-mart, supplied by the plundering war-ships of the knights with Turkish slaves —men, women, and children. They attacked every vessel in the Mediterranean which bore the Turkish flag, tore down every mosque on the shores, plundered every village, killing every one whom they did not carry off. Their records, which were carefully kept, show that they carried off from the city of Mondon alone no less than eight hundred Turkish matrons and maidens to be kept as concubines or sold as slaves.* Till within a hundred years this life continued, all being called a Christian work, and being only gradually humanized as they drove the Turks from the seas. The Sultan of to-day is only a belated Knight of St. John fighting on the other side.

Thus when we long after peace we still have to recognize that events and conditions are often too strong for us. It was a curious combination of circumstances the other day when the very ladies who had argued that if woman suffrage prevailed there would be no more wars, were the very first persons to call on the United States to go to war with Turkey. As many wars are perhaps brought on by

* Ballou's *Malta*, p. 281.

the sense of justice and the impulses of humanity as by any other cause. When these high motives are set against the love of peace, which shall prevail? On which side do the angels really sing? Again, it is easy to urge the gospel of arbitration for the whole world; but suppose, as occasionally happens, that a nation refuses to arbitrate. What then? Or suppose, as has sometimes happened, that a nation refuses to accept the result of arbitration when announced. What is to be done? The answer is that such a case will not be likely to occur. But suppose it does. Can we wholly dispense with force? I have known many persons who were non-resistants, or thought they were, but I have known only one among them who could meet squarely the question what he would do if a drunken man or a villain should come into his house and assault his wife or daughter. That one exception was the late William Lloyd Garrison, whom I heard say in public, without a moment's hesitation, when asked the question, that he would offer no physical resistance even in such a case. I honored his moral courage, but wondered if when it came to the point he would live up to his principles. If he would not, nobody would. Perhaps it

would have been better if he had made to such a question that more guarded and very noble answer once made by Dr. Channing: "What I would do in the hour of trial may be doubtful; what I ought to do is plain. What I desire to do is known to the Searcher of all Hearts."

It is a rash thing to say, as is sometimes said even by the clergy, that the spirit of commerce is destined to supersede that of war. For commerce is itself not so very remote from war, much of it being warfare almost undisguised. On a given occasion it may take a higher tone than war; at other times a lower. The chief obstacle to the abolition of the slave-trade in England was found in the Liverpool merchants; and humanity has often to fight its way over commerce. But of course the pure spirit of religion is another thing, and we must never falter in the belief that the human race is gradually drawing nearer towards peace. Probably none know the horrors of war so well as those who have been in the midst of it. *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, says the terse Latin motto—"War is sweet to those who have never tried it." Yet it has shown to soldiers also its brighter side —not merely its carnage, but its mutual self-

devotion, its patient endurance, its loyalty to home and country. An American judge, son of an American poet, and himself a soldier in youth, has lately given an address on "The Soldier's Faith," which, while itself somewhat overstated doubtless, has been harshly, almost brutally, attacked as glorifying only the lower side of our nature. Yet all that he said was but little more than was said during our civil war by Emerson, the calmest and least combative of philosophers. He, too, saw the curious fact that while war is in itself barbarous, yet it partly counterbalances this evil by bringing out certain virtues which in calmer and commercial times are less prominent. Some vocations exhibit them; the fireman, the policeman, the sailor, the railway engineer, may show them, as do often the wife and mother; but none of these on a scale so conspicuous and irresistible as in the conflict of war. Emerson's conclusion is, "Certain it is that never before since I read newspapers has the *morale* played so large a part in them as now"—that is, early in the civil war.

He had written in his journal long before, in 1850: "Yes, the terror and repudiation of war . . . may be a form of materialism . . .

and show that all that engages you is what happens to men's bodies." When the war itself comes he writes: "The Divine order pays the country for the sacrifices it has made, and makes, in the war. War ennobles the country; searches it; fires it; acquaints it with its resources; turns it away from false alliances, vain hopes, and theatric attitude; puts it on its mettle — in ourselves our safety must be sought; gives it scope and object; concentrates history into a year; invents means; systematizes everything. We began the war in vast confusion; when we end it all will be system." * There is nothing in Judge Holmes's oration which goes quite so far as this. Yet this is the writer whom Matthew Arnold, denying him the name of poet and philosopher, proclaimed as "the friend and comforter of those who would live in the spirit."

We are left in the conclusion that there are two aspects of everything, and that good comes sometimes of things evil. Read the one poem which has made Bayard Taylor's name immortal, "A Song of the Camp," and consider the peculiar beauty and pathos of

* *Emerson in Concord*, by his son, p. 89.

this flower of human love in the midst of cannon. War might well seem what Horace Bushnell called it, "the devil's play," but for these loftier aspects. We must never quite lose sight of Emerson's fine lines:

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply—
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die."

(1896)

XV

THE CANT OF COSMOPOLITANISM

THIS is the period when young people just coming out of college are receiving a good deal of advice, and giving some. As it is the period when they feel oldest for themselves, and are regarded as youngest by their elders, most of the advice is superfluous, and is pretty sure not to be heeded. They are at a time when they must learn, not by the wisdom or unwisdom of others, but by their own—and particularly by their own—blunders. They may, for instance, fall into either of two forms of cant—that of spread-eagleism or that of cosmopolitanism. Of the two, the cant of cosmopolitanism is the worst. It belongs chiefly to the untravelled, or to those who have travelled very little. No one is quite so cosmopolitan as the youth who, having crossed the ocean on a cattle-steamer, has found his way to Paris, and has been prevented from being a little

wicked only by the lingering of a very few scruples and the presence of but a very few dollars. After his return to his family his cosmopolitanism is appalling. Perhaps there is a maiden who might compare with him, the damsel who has been taken abroad with the expectation of becoming the proud bride of a ducal coronet, and has come home with only a complete wardrobe and an exceedingly incomplete French accent. The more experienced often go abroad, as Emerson said—and Motley and Lowell illustrated—"to be Americanized." That is, they learn that the nation of which they are a portion has its own career to work out; that nothing that can be learned or won in Europe is too good for us, but that you can no more transplant the social atmosphere of Europe than you can change the climate or the sky.

They learn also the folly of supposing that cosmopolitanism means good manners, or has, indeed, very much to do with them. Perhaps, if we hear a man mentioned as a cosmopolite, we are apt to expect good manners from him; but if we substitute the now familiar and irreverent word "globe-trotter," the spell vanishes. A globe-trotter does not necessarily have good manners. We soon learn that it is

possible to visit many nations and see less, on the whole, than if one had stayed at home; and that it is easy to say nothing through a great many tongues. No one would send his children to be trained in manners among a circle of professional couriers. Some of the most essentially vulgar women ever seen in American society have been those most versed in European drawing-rooms, and, by all testimony, not unpopular there. The brilliant Lady Eastlake went so far as to assert that high society in London "positively likes vulgarity, if it be but new"; and that "Sir Francis Palgrave was right in saying that a person who would say rude things would be sure to take in London." And in circles of really good manners, some of the Americans who have been most cordially received in Europe, from the Revolutionary days until the present time, have been those who did not go abroad until middle life, when their habits had been formed wholly at home. The late Richard Grant White always maintained that he never saw in Europe manners so fine as those of his own grandfather, in New England; and when he himself first visited England, at fifty or thereabouts, he was described in the London papers as having the bearing of a lord and the figure

of a guardsman. In the same way Lady Eastlake describes Motley's visible annoyance at being constantly addressed as "Milord" at German hotels; and I knew a Boston lady, going abroad for the first time after middle life, who was identified for her husband by the *Suisse* at a crowded cathedral, where they had got separated, as "the lady with a grand air."

What we all need to teach our children is that manners are not a matter of veneering, but ingrain. In Tennyson's phrase:

> "Kind nature's are the best; those next to best
> That fit us like a nature second-hand,
> Which are indeed the manners of the great."

It is possible, in other words, to have better manners than those of the merely great, by having a surer foundation. Why not strike for the best? Self-respect, self-control, kind feeling, refined habits—these are the basis. If, in addition to these, one happens to inherit an agreeable voice and a good intonation, what more is essential? The trivialities of spoons and napkins are easily enough acquired. I have sat at table with a Pueblo Indian chief, introduced for the first time to silver forks, who handled those and all other implements with an awkwardness so dignified and delicate

that it actually gave a charm. Never have I seen finer manners than those of an old "body-servant" whom I knew in my youth on a Virginia plantation, who could neither read nor write, and had never gone farther from home than the White Sulphur Springs. There is no delusion greater than that which confounds good manners with cosmopolitan experience.

In the same way, those who are always urging the need of cosmopolitanism in our literature are usually youths and maidens just from college, whose vast knowledge of the great world is yet to come. It is not necessary to deny the advantage that proceeds, on the whole, from those changes which make travel easier and cause the world to seem smaller. But it is well to remember how much may be done by staying at home. Hawthorne's fame still rests on his *Scarlet Letter*. Mr. Henry James derides Thoreau as not merely provincial, but parochial; yet that parochial life has found already three biographers in England, which is possibly two more than the life-long transplantation of Mr. James may win for him. On the other hand, what place in the world is less truly cosmopolitan than Paris, where no native feels called upon to learn a modern language or visit a foreign country,

but each Frenchman remains at home for other people to visit him and learn the language he speaks? Paul Bourget, it is to be noticed, had to place his Cosmopolis elsewhere than in Paris. And what a commentary it is upon the qualities which make for permanence that the genius of Edgar Allan Poe has so impressed itself on French literature as still to be quoted there, while successive literary models in that very language—Charles de Bernard, Stendhal, Baudelaire, even Guy de Maupassant—have risen and passed away!

The moral is that while cosmopolitanism may be an ornament either in manners or in literature, provided more essential qualities are secured, yet "the root of the matter" is elsewhere. First get the real qualities, which lie at the basis, whether of social manners or of literary style, and all the rest shall be added unto you.

(1896)

XVI

ANGLOMANIA AND ANGLOPHOBIA

IT must always be borne in mind that the range of our alleged Anglomania is not very wide nor its depth very great. It touches mainly a few points of dress and social usage, sometimes caught up foolishly for imitation, but more often wisely. Yet even among the class most charged with it the costliest things, the domestic architecture, the furniture, the internal decorations of houses, are almost all brought from the continent of Europe, not from England; while we go mainly to France for pictures and to Germany for science, very much as if England did not exist. In all this there is properly no element of liking or disliking, but merely the natural impulse of a newer nation to go where there are the best models, and to get the most valuable things. It is an instinct as natural as that which led Robinson Crusoe to visit and revisit the wrecked

vessel: he was not paying a compliment to the vessel; he simply desired the things on board. But it is a curious fact that men's likings are usually simpler and less perplexing than their dislikings; and this is true of our national instincts. It is plain enough why we should like or imitate England; but whence comes this vague and widely spread dislike of her? Why is it that our naval officers tell us that they fraternize more cordially in foreign ports with French or Russian naval officers than with English? Why is it that if sane Americans could soberly contemplate the prospect of a war with any nation on earth, there is no question that a war with England would be more popular than any other, in almost all parts of the United States?

Undoubtedly there are many causes. There are the long traditions of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and the instinctive dislikes towards England of Republican protectionists and of Irish-American Democrats. But it would seem as if, in spite of all these things, blood must be thicker than water, and that even those who are not linked with "the mother-country" by blood must recognize some tie of language, at least at a time when it looks as if that great empire, so aggressive

and yet so beneficent, were about to be left to fight its battles single-handed. Possibly it would be so when it came to the point; but the most ominous thing is the fact, lying behind all the condition of affairs, that this covert antagonism is in a manner reciprocal. It is very curious, for instance, to trace through the pages of Matthew Arnold's correspondence, just published, the traces of a profound international distrust pervading his whole life, long before he had ever planned crossing the Atlantic. A man of cold temperament, often narrow, often whimsical, but thoroughly wishing to be just, he can never even compliment an American except with an implied surprise that he should be such a wholly exceptional specimen of his kind. If he thinks well of the offender, it is as some tailor or footman sometimes compliments one of us in London: "You an American, sir? I give you my word of honor I never should have suspected it!" Finally he touches the precise point now at issue when he writes to his mother at the very beginning of our Civil War. "I don't imagine the feeling of kinship with them [Americans] exists at all among the higher classes; after immediate blood-relationship, the relationship of the soul is the

only important thing; and this one has far more with the French, Italians, or Germans than with the Americans." * Very well, if this be so, why should Americans not accept the situation, and fraternize more readily with the French, the Italians, or the Germans than with the English?

And if it be said that though kindred may quarrel yet an emergency commonly reunites them, it must be remembered that this was written at the time of our own greatest emergency, the only effect of which was to set these our kindred further off. As the England-loving Motley wrote in those days, "the greatest war of principle which has been waged in this generation at least was of no more importance to her [England], except as it bore upon the cotton question, than the wretched squabbles of Mexico or South America." † We knew that this was true at that time of the aristocratic class and of the literary class; but Mr. Arnold's correspondence gives us a curious illustration how true it was of the middle class also. In the very last year of the Civil War, it seems, a class in the

* *Letters*, I., 182.

† *Motley's Correspondence*, I., 373.

Training College, which Arnold was inspecting, had it as a subject to write an imaginary letter from an English emigrant in America in regard to matters here, "and there is really not one per cent.," Arnold writes, "who does not take the strongest possible side for the Confederates; and you know from what class these students were drawn."* They were drawn, we may assume, from the lower middle class. This corresponds to all the experience of those who visited England during or soon after the Civil War, to the overwhelming antagonism there existing against the Union cause at a time when we were, in General Sherman's phrase, "expending one thousand million dollars and one hundred thousand lives" to put down the slavery which England had always condemned us for tolerating. Moreover, fortunately or unfortunately, the sympathy of England for secession when manifested came in a form so inadequate and inconsistent that it offended even those whom it meant to befriend, and there is no especial sympathy visible in our Southern States in that direction.

Add to this the long series of insults so

* *Letters*, I., 285.

ingeniously brought by the *Times* and the *Saturday Review*, and by the London penny-a-liners, all studiously working to destroy all English sympathy in the minds of that literary class in America which should be, in case of need, most friendly to England. It is impossible to estimate how much this petty literary antagonism has done to furnish fuel for the so-called "jingo" side in a world where the gospel of turning the other cheek to the smiter is yet imperfectly established. When we speak of England as "isolated" among the nations of Europe is it possible to forget how long the arrogance of the typical Englishman has been isolating itself? Surprise is felt that France, amid the rumors of wars, should turn to Germany, which so lately humiliated her, and should turn from England, which was only an ancient foe. But to find the secrets of this hostility we must look from the publicists to the literary men, who will reveal it. It was the accomplished critic Jules Lemaître who wrote, a few years ago: "The Frenchman who sets foot in London feels himself weighed down by the contempt of the whole people. All their journals distil it (*Ce mépris, tous leurs journaux le suent*). How are we to love those who treat us thus? To give so much of esteem and

admiration and receive such scorn in return, this demands of us too much humility or too complete an indifference." *

The so-called "jingo" feeling in America—which seems, to the present writer, a peril and an anachronism—will never be fully comprehended except by studying the kindred condition of the French mind, as seen in these words of the most accomplished of French critics. The moral is that nations, like individuals, reap what they have sown; and that if we too do injustice, we may awake too late to the discovery that we must pay the price.

* *Les Contemporains*, IV., 299.

(1896)

XVII

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN GENTLEMEN

A REPORT is going the rounds of the newspapers—and may, nevertheless, be true—that some Cornell University students were ruled out from rowing in the Henley regatta because they had crossed the ocean in a cattle-steamer; and had therefore earned money by the work of their hands. The college oarsmen, it was stated, "must be gentlemen," and no gentleman could have worked with his hands. The rumor looks a little improbable, because in *Tom Brown at Rugby*, written nearly half a century ago, a college crew is described as being saved by the rowing of a plebeian student, who had, it is to be presumed, done some manual labor. If, however, the tale be true, it points to a difference, still insurmountable, between the English and American students. Even in circles of inherited wealth in this country it is not at all uncommon for a young

man who is to enter upon manufacturing or mining or railroad business to begin himself at the foundation, work with the laborers, dine from a tin pail, and be paid wages like the rest. Among the owners of mines and factories the greater number have begun on the tin-pail level. To all these the word "gentleman" means something very different from what it means in England. It means good manners and good education, whether the owner dates back to a cattle-steamer or otherwise. This might be called, in a certain way, the Christian meaning of the word—inasmuch as the founder of this religion was a carpenter's son, and, as the Church has generally held, worked at his father's trade in early youth. Yet he was called by the poet Dekker, in a line which is very likely to prove immortal—

"The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

There are two great defects in the working of the English theory that a gentleman must never, under any circumstances, have worked with his hands. The first is that it handicaps every one who has so worked, and makes it harder for him, even in the American sense, to be a gentleman. People are very apt to be

what is expected of them. Assume that a whole class will be clowns, and they are more likely to be so; assume that they are to be gentlemen, you remove half the obstacle to their success. Hence much of the flexibility of American character, its ready adaptation. Since it made no difference to anybody else that Whittier had been in youth a farmer's boy in summer and a shoemaker in winter, it made no difference to him; and nobody stopped to ask whether he had sustained, in childhood, the same refining influences with Longfellow and Lowell. In New York, in Washington, one often encounters eminent men who have worked with their hands. In England these men would have carried for life the stamp of that experience—some misplaced *h*, some Yorkshire burr would have stamped them forever. In America the corresponding drawbacks have been easily effaced and swept away. No doubt climate and temperament have something to do with this difference, but the recognized social theory has more. It grows largely out of the changed definition of the word "gentleman." In America this altered classification has let down the bars. The word "gentleman" denotes a class that is henceforward accessible to merit.

The other defect of the English standard is that it perpetuates, even inside those who rank as gentlemen, a permanent feudalism, a wholly artificial standard of social subordination. This lasts even to the present time. In the autobiography of Anthony Trollope there is an especial chapter on the question, "How a literary man should treat his social superiors"—a chapter which is, to an American literary man, first ludicrous and then pathetic. Walter Besant in his *Fifty Years Ago* enumerated the list of eminent authors and scientists of the Victorian period, and pointed with what seemed like pride to the fact that they had had nothing to do with the court of Victoria. Now that he has been knighted, he doubtless acquiesces with resignation. But the crowning illustration of the curious attitude given by belated feudalism to the author is to be found in the lately published letters of Sir Walter Scott. They are delightful in all respects but one—the absolute self-subordination, the personal prostration, with which he writes to every titled nonentity about him. Men younger than himself, now utterly forgotten by the world at large, were treated by this leading Scotch intellect of his day as if they conferred honor by letting him write to

them; and the very grace and naturalness with which it is done shows how ingrain it is. To the chief of his clan, especially, Scott poses as the humble minstrel for whom it is honor enough to sit in the doorway of his liege and amuse that august leisure. That this attitude was not inevitable we know by the very different tone of Burns; but the facility with which Scott fell into it shows the strength of the feudal tradition; while the attitude of Trollope and Besant shows that it still survives.

But Scott's letters are of especial value for this: that they absolutely defeat the theory held by many Englishmen and some Americans as to the close resemblance between an aristocracy of birth and one of wealth. No one can read these letters of Scott's and imagine for an instant an American man of genius as writing in the same tone to any merely rich man. He might write more beseechingly when he had favors to ask, he might use more direct flattery; but the feudal flavor would not be there, nor would it be possible to put it on. It would not, like Scott's tone, be spontaneous, unaffected, and in that point of view almost dignified. Cringing and mean it might be, but not ingrain and unconscious.

It would be the exceptional mean act of a consciously base man; it would not represent the very organization and structure of society. It was because Scott was personally a man of high tone that this deferential attitude is a thing alarming—and instructive. If he had done it for a particular purpose it would have represented far less. It only shows that the feudal survival is really the thing nearest the heart of those who dwell under its influence, and that the satiric pictures of Thackeray are not obsolete, but really belong to to-day. A nation is tested not by watching the class which looks down, but by the class which looks up. In England the upper classes naturally and innocently look down, and the middle and lower classes look up. In the United States the so-called upper class may or may not look down, but the rest do not look up, and this makes an ineradicable difference. The less favored may point with pride or gaze with curiosity, but they certainly do not manifest reverence for the mere social position. Something akin to that feeling may be called out by the political hero, the favorite author, even by the local "boss," but by mere wealth never. It is better so.

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XVIII

THE FUTURE OF POLITE SOCIETY

DR. LYMAN ABBOTT, in a late paper, thinks that polite society, in the exclusive sense, is hardly destined to sustain itself. His reason is that wealth is superseding birth as its basis. In this respect, however, his inference is doubtful, while his facts are true. He says that "some communities, like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, make a brave attempt to maintain a respect for old families; but this is an inheritance from colonial days, and visibly wanes." He might have gone further and have said that in only one of these three cities — Philadelphia — has the "smart set" any particular connection with old families or gives itself any concern about them. The utmost that it does is to draw a feeble line at the recognized occupations of fathers, while the occupation or social position of the grandfather is pretty thoroughly ignored. Given a

fortune, with a reasonable amount of tact, and one generation, at most two, can accomplish the rest. There is a lingering rumor that at Newport a rich dealer in patent medicines was for years successfully kept from buying land on the fashionable avenue; but if so, the exclusion was in itself an absurdity, like those attempted distinctions between wholesale and retail trade. Surely it is absurd to assume it as plebeian to sell tape by the piece, and not plebeian to sell it by the thousand pieces; to call it discreditable when a fortune is made by a medicine, and not when it is made by hotel-keeping or laying water-pipes or carrying on the express business. All these vocations, and a thousand others equally modest and respectable, have contributed to the gilding of our *jeunesse dorée*, and no one need be ashamed of any one of them, except when it tempts him to sneer at some other.

When Mrs. Thrale, the witty friend and hostess of Dr. Samuel Johnson, after being left the widow of a brewer, married for her second husband a professional musician, Signor Piozzi, all London society thought that she had degraded herself; whereas, when she went to Italy, her husband's musical relatives wondered that she could ever, even in youth,

have stooped so low as to marry a brewer. It was a period when in society, described by Miss Berry from girlish recollection, "authors, actors, composers, singers, musicians were all equally considered as profligate vagrants." Thus various are the habits of nations. With Americans, again, the brewer sinks in comparative standing, and the musician rises. Once accept the fiction of hereditary nobility, and it leads you to extend its traditions over all your circle. The first effort of acquired wealth is to supply itself with a coat of arms—to sail, that is, under the flag of "the old families." A Scotch antiquarian, Ferne, writing *The Blazen of Gentry* in 1586, carrying the process a little further, affirms that the Twelve Apostles of Christianity, although apparently humble fishermen, were undoubtedly gentlemen of high blood, in temporary poverty, but "entitled to bear coat armour." Many of them, he is satisfied, were descended from "that worthy conqueror Judas Maccabæus."

But the truth is that the distinction between a newly enriched family and a family descended even from Judas Maccabæus is a mere matter of a century or two. Every family has sprung, as Lord Murray in Scott's *Monastery* says, "from one mean man"—tak-

ing the word "mean" only in the sense of humility of station. He usually raised himself largely by the aid of wealth, and often by qualities held in their day disreputable. In a country of hereditary aristocracy it is rare to dwell much on the first step taken by the "mean man"; people often admit very frankly that his elevation came from the trickery of some courtier or from some woman's disgrace. What they urge in favor of the system is that aristocracy is a habit of living, not a difference in the chemical atoms of the blood; that people acquire by the exercise of power and station a certain advantage of manner and tone. Now comes Mr. Hamerton and points out, with great skill and plausibility, that all this applies just as clearly to an aristocracy of wealth, and that a household which spends $20,000 a year for two or three generations becomes insensibly different in its habits and standards from one which spends $500 a year. This does not imply that these standards and habits are necessarily superior, especially on the moral side; on the contrary, it is now common in all countries to speak rather contemptuously of "the bourgeois virtues," as if high breeding soon carried us beyond those. The point is that this high breeding,

for good or for evil, is easily manufactured in a few generations, and that birth and wealth both have a hand in the manufacture.

The curious thing is that those who profess a religion which theoretically goes back to the son of a carpenter should fall in with this assumption and acquiesce in either of these aristocracies as the final and sufficient thing. If there is to be any real or permanent progress in human society, it must be by that process of levelling upward which has already taken us beyond feudalism and human slavery, but is still struggling with the inequalities of a transition period. We must surely come to a time when no labor will degrade except by being unmanly or unwomanly, and when good manners will be exercised to all upon something approaching a level, and not by looking down from above. We cannot be satisfied with plantation manners or servile manners; they must be humane manners—that is, human. As vocations are gradually refined and elevated by machinery—turning, as Napoleon Bonaparte predicted, trades into arts—it becomes more and more absurd to classify men and women by occupation instead of character. Howells has lately pointed out how pitifully Dickens stultified his own democratic ten-

dencies when he showed himself "really and lastingly ashamed of having once put up shoeblacking as a boy, and was unable to forgive his mother for suffering him to be so degraded." Howells adds, admirably, "One perceives that he too was the slave of conventions and the victim of conditions which it is the highest function of his criticism to help destroy." It may be set down as a certainty that no form of society is permanent which makes any person ashamed of ever having done a stroke of honest labor.

(1896)

XIX

THE PROBLEM OF DRUDGERY

IT is a curious fact that, as society goes on, the very things that once stood for luxury come to be laid aside, and people revert to what is simpler. Feather-beds, for instance, were the former symbol of wealth and grandeur; the luxurious aristocrats of a former age were addressed as, "Now all you on down beds sporting," and the like. Yet it is only the most rustic tavern that now offers one of these rather than a mattress, and only the newly arrived Irish woman who counts among her chief treasures her bulky feather-bed. So was white bread another symbol of social superiority; and yet now it is discovered that the snowier the bread the less its nourishment, and we resort to all sorts of admixtures in order not to lose the best parts of the wheat. In time we shall doubtless learn that complete indolence or self-indulgence is not the most

satisfying form of success, but that we must have some drudgery to make it complete. The most thoroughly leisured classes have to invent some form of hard work for themselves in the shape of field sports or yachting or golfing; and aside from this, the mere social duties, when taken at their highest, have drudgery enough to frighten any innocent rustic, and often to discourage the votaries themselves. Where is social pleasure carried to a higher point than in Newport?—yet one of the very ladies occupied in it said to me some years ago, "It takes my four daughters and myself every atom of our time and strength, from day to day, simply to keep up with our social obligations; this lasts all summer, and then we return to the city and recommence precisely the same life there, and it will last all winter, with only a slight mitigation in Lent." It is safe to say that no farmer's or miner's daughter would be able to tolerate such an existence for a month; and yet all these ladies were cultivated, independent, and full of higher tastes that remained ungratified through want of leisure.

For men of the same class there is a shade more freedom, with perhaps less refined tastes. What can be imagined in the way of conver-

sation that is more vapid than the talk which may easily go on for a whole evening at a club of fashionable men! My most vivid memory of social drudgery goes back to an evening when I happened in at the chief club in Newport, and three or four gentlemen of this stamp were debating the question of servants' liveries. Two hours later I chanced to look in again, and they were still at it, a little refreshed by the suggestion of a change of tailors. They were all, I believe, worthy men, but what must their ordinary existence be if this was their relaxation? The wood-sawyer who should studiously provide a place where he could go in the evening and saw for fun would seem wise in comparison; there must be a certain interest in the "something attempted, something done," of laboring away at a wood-pile. The author of a recent very thoughtful and suggestive book—Mr. E. L. Godkin's *Political and Economic Essays*—thinks that the labor problem is really insoluble, because it is truly the problem of "making the manual laborers of the world content with their lot." But how many a man of wealth in this country works willingly on a scale which would appall any day-laborer, and this simply from love of the exertion; and is only glad

when a portion of it may come in the form of actual manual labor, even as Charles V. was glad to turn away from the task of governing half Europe to devote himself to clock-making.

One looks round in vain to find a pursuit without drudgery. Which is the more exhausting, for Mr. Bryan to travel day and night over the land to meet his admirers, or for Mr. McKinley to stay at home and receive delegations of his by the thousand? As a matter of personal happiness, is the Presidency, or the ghost of a chance of the Presidency, worth either? Three promising and successful members of the Lower House of Congress from a single State, within my knowledge, have recently declined renomination because they found the drudgery so overwhelming, two of them returning to the practice of the law and one to agriculture. Yet both these occupations are regarded as full of drudgery. Two of my college classmates were eminent lawyers, of whom both made constant complaints of this kind, and one retired in the full tide of success for this very reason. I have a neighbor, an eminent physician, who lately, in his eightieth year, spent three successive nights at the bedside of one patient. The professors

in the university town where I dwell are allowed a respite of a year every seventh year—their Sabbatical year, they call it—lest their drudgery prove too overwhelming. When I call during business hours on my kinsman the banker I stand reproached before the tremendous and wearing drudgery of his life. What need to speak of the fatigues and trials of the housekeeper? The shopkeeper is tied to his counter or his office, the mechanic to his bench. Among all these it is a choice only of the kind of drudgery; and I confess that of all these various labors the form which seems to me, on thinking them over, the least repellent and most attractive is that of the line of boat-builders on a certain sunny wharf I know, who work all day in their airy shops, with an endless stream of friends coming in to chat or children to play, where the work always ends in something graceful and beautiful and useful, and even the shavings are sweet-scented and the dust is clean.

If we cannot get away from drudgery, whether of *grande dame* or boat-builder, let us at least try for some species of it that is enjoyable. It is this test which puts literature and art so high among pursuits—the fact that, for those who love them, their very drudgery is,

within reasonable limits, a pleasure. The artist is, said Goethe, the only man who lives with unconcealed aims; and he also loves even to mix his colors and stretch his canvas. Haydon, the painter, says in his diary that when he gets a large canvas up, and goes to work on a new historical picture, kings are not his superiors. Every writer feels the same in entering on a new work, large or small; and if he is healthy and reasonable the pleasure holds out to the end, though perhaps with some intermittent periods of fatigue and discouragement. The old German professor in Longfellow's "Hyperion" hopes to die with a proof-sheet in his hand. It is unreasonable for any of us to expect that we shall be spoiled children and not have our share in the cares and vexations of men. If our lives are sound, these matters are secondary to the fact that we are doing, in some way or other, good and useful work. If it is not well for us to live only on the very finest wheat, we may well accept serenely a due proportion of wholesome bran. Above all, let us remember that life is short, that there are but twenty-four hours in the day, and that we cannot combine everything. To live greatly in society we must forego work in the studio or the library; to live

greatly in these last one must forego much of society; to live a life of philanthropy one must often resign them all. The late President James Walker, of Harvard University, said, as the result of much observation, "Put it down as a rule that no really eminent lawyer ever reads a book"—for lack of time. And Elmsley, the Greek critic, when asked by Lady Eastlake why the Germans beat the English in scholarship, replied, "Because they never go out to tea."

(1896)

XX

CLASSES AND MASSES

WHEN we read in the newspapers of balloon-flying or horseless vehicles, it hardly comes home to us that impending changes in human invention may transform our lives anew and make these days of bicycles and electric trains seem very far away. The most impressive thought inspired by the great Columbian Exposition was the reflection that the vast Machinery Hall, if locked up for fifty years, might be valued only as a museum of antiquities. Men always feel for a time that the inscription *Ne Plus Ultra* is written on the latest step forward. It is the same with all great social changes. A lifelong New-Yorker, still under seventy, told me, some years since, that he remembered the time when he could easily name the owner of every private vehicle in that city. It was like a country village, where one distinguishes at a

glance the doctor's sulky from the minister's chaise. Take your stand at the main carriage entrance of Central Park and see how vast the transformation implied by this simple reminiscence! In smaller and more compact cities the change is yet more easily illustrated. In Boston, this year, the largest individual estate pays a tax of $60,567. In 1834 the largest individual tax paid was $2225, and the estate on which it was paid, that of Gardiner Greene, was valued at only $360,900. In other words, the largest estate, sixty-two years ago, was only six times as large as the mere tax bill of the largest property of to-day. In 1834 there was not even a semi-millionaire in Boston; there were but thirty-five persons whose property was assessed at $150,000; they were regarded as rich men. In a country town in Massachusetts, at a period a little later, a witness testified in court that by a rich man he meant a man worth $10,000.

It is such changes as this which lead men to talk, for the first time in America, at the last Presidential election, of classes and masses. It is to be wished, perhaps, that Mr. Gladstone had never introduced that undesirable phrase; but since he did, it is not strange that, like other English slang, it should be

transplanted. It does not come alone from the dissatisfied; one of the leading American newspapers, speaking from a conservative point of view, accepts the attitude, and distributes the classes in the following way. According to this writer, the "upper class" in American society consists of those whose income is above $100,000; the "upper middle," of incomes from $6000 to $100,000; the "lower middle," from $1000 to $6000; while the "lower class" consists of those whose whole income is below $1000. As applied, this practically keeps farmers, mechanics, and day laborers in the lower class; ordinary professional men, shopkeepers, head clerks, judges, and Congressmen in the lower middle; the best-paid men of these pursuits in the upper middle; while the higher class includes only great speculators or mine-owners or owners of real estate or employers of labor on a large scale—or else the children and heirs of these last classes. Of course the whole classification is frankly based on wealth alone, leaving birth, education, or character out of sight, except, perhaps, as recognizing that brains at least have some share in money-making. Of the golden rule there is not a hint, nor is there any recognition of the fact that in some

American communities these other elements still count for something. In all college towns, for instance, education usually outranks wealth; and in some communities — as Boston, Philadelphia, Richmond, and the Southern States generally—great-grandmothers and even cousins still represent a good deal. But as to all the newer and most of the busier parts of the United States, the classification hits pretty near home.

Now we have all wished to postpone forever all talk of masses and classes in this country; but the important thing is to weigh the facts just as they are and govern ourselves accordingly. It has been pointed out several times in these papers that there is no essential difference, in origin, between the aristocracy of wealth and that of birth. Hereditary aristocracy is simply a skilful device for perpetuating the prestige of wealth; it is a longer investment, a securer mortgage, the structure being built in stone instead of wood. The rich man in this country knows that if his son loses his wealth he loses everything; the rich man in England knows that his descendants, once ennobled, can hold their own in spite of poverty, folly, and even vice. This is a very poor result for the community, as

most Americans would agree, but it is a great convenience for the family immediately concerned. Nothing works better in American life than the promptness with which the degenerate scions of honored parents drop out of sight; in England they simply marry a fortune and retain their power. As one result, most people in England, even radical reformers, have acquired the habit of cringing more or less before hereditary rank. In America there is more or less jealousy of wealth, but very little cringing. It is doubtful whether a mere aristocracy of wealth can ever create much cringing beyond its immediate village or city. It is only an hereditary aristocracy that is sufficiently intrenched to assert such universally recognized prestige.

It is to be remembered, however, that another pillar of hereditary aristocracy—land-ownership—is easily enough created in a nation of mere wealth. In the country town where this is written—a village of about a hundred permanent families, and in local situation the highest village in New England—the main territorial ownership is steadily passing into the hands of a comparatively few "city people." There are three men who own a thousand acres apiece or thereabouts. The farms

they have bought up are either abandoned or worked on shares or let out at a low rent, rarely being occupied by the original farmers. The tendency is to substitute for the original freehold system what is practically a tenantry, with a group remaining in the village of what were once farming families, but who now obtain, by trade with the "city people," or work done for them, a better living than the farms ever yielded. All this is not the result of any tyranny or mortgage-grasping, but of simple purchase and transfer acceptable to all classes; there is the best of feeling, but it points to a vast and far-reaching change of tenure. Nothing apparently can sustain what is called in Europe "peasant proprietorship" except those iron laws which in France subdivide the inheritence of real estate into as many strips as there are children in a household—a method that would be utterly intolerable to the American mind. The upshot of it all is, that while our Constitution and general laws are secure, our social structure is still fluid and changing before our eyes, and our wisest advisers cannot yet tell us just what is to be the outcome. The impending changes imply some evil, and yet it seems altogether likely that they will at last take some form that will make for good.

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XXI

INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES

WHAT are called by the high-sounding name of "international marriages" not only serve as material for gossip in our vast and hungry newspaper press, but also for matter of thought to those who study social tendencies. The thoughts they suggest lie in the same direction with those aroused whenever a rich American buys a castle in Europe, or even leases a shooting preserve in Scotland. All these are chiefly interesting because they bear on the problem of the position and prospects of wealth in a republic. Nobody cares when an economical American student goes to live in Berlin, or a poor girl marries an impecunious Englishman. There must be added to the affair that little flavor of splendor that comes from wealth, or it is nothing. This is not mere snobbishness. There is more of genuine snobbishness in a London day than

in an American year. It is largely a good-natured curiosity; and behind this lies, with the judicious, a real desire to philosophize on the future workings of American aristocracy, if such a thing there is to be.

It seems very complimentary to this country, on the whole, that the upper extremes of wealth find themselves uncomfortable here, and discover that they can get much more for their money in Europe. This was acutely pointed out by our best critic, Mr. Bryce, who makes the matter very clear. All American ways and methods are founded largely upon the needs of the great middle class of the community. Wealth in the United States can only buy a little more of those comforts and luxuries of which everybody has something. But wealth in England can buy that of which the great body have nothing — the possession of hereditary rank. When a man grows rich enough, no matter whether his wealth came by breweries or by public employment, he can fairly expect to reach the ranks of the titled classes; and thenceforward, if he plays his cards well, he may climb higher and higher. This is a privilege wholly different in kind from anything that wealth gives in America. Moreover, some of the best nat-

ural instincts assist this tendency. Every parent wishes to provide for his offspring. Now riches have wings, but a place in the peerage has not. The pauper son of the millionaire is nobody, but the earl's son holds his position securely in spite of poverty, or even of crime. This is a clew to much of the charm possessed by hereditary rank for rich Americans; and the repeated instances of misery which have followed its pursuit always leave room for a hope that the next experiment may turn out better.

And even apart from rank, everything in English society, or even that of Continental Europe, gives to wealth an advantage which it may never claim here. The vast estates, the perfectly organized service, the habit of deference, afford a sort of paradise to those who look no further than themselves. Even an American bishop, it is said, is not altogether free from the delight inspired, on English soil, by hearing himself called "Me Lud." It is very striking to see the unanimity with which highly cultivated Americans—Sumner, Ticknor, Motley, Hawthorne, Lowell — have expressed in their diaries or letters an American reaction against these splendors, to which they were here and there admitted in Eng-

land; and an involuntary feeling that, in Hawthorne's phrase, a vast number of people must be housed too little in order that a few may be housed so much. But it is only the thoughtful and cultivated man who finds such drawbacks as this; while he who merely regards wealth as a personal privilege and as something to be spent wholly for his own gratification, likes naturally to be where that privilege is largest; and this is clearly in Europe, not in America. Women, to whom the external charm of aristocratic life is greatest, and who have only lately begun to philosophize about social progress, are naturally more blinded than men to the real drawbacks of that brilliant society. Hence the greater part of those American women who have married into the higher circles of English life are said to be more than English in their Tory proclivities; there is scarcely a liberal among them.

Much of the criticism on "international marriages" is no doubt unjust—as that they carry wealth out of the country, and the like. Supposing it to be an evil to send wealth out of the country, what difference does it make whether it is spent in paying Worth's bills at Paris or in rebuilding a French château? If the great extremes of wealth are hard to rec-

oncile with republican government, as most persons think, why not send those extreme cases elsewhere, to some scene where they fit in better? Nothing hinders the progress of new ideas, new social methods, reforms that touch the root of society, so much as those very extremes. Our worst demagogues are always the rich demagogues. The truly dangerous trusts and combinations do not come from the poor. It is really a more serious problem in social study what to do with our multi-millionaires than with our paupers. A republic can get on very well where all pay a small tax; but where an individual tax bill may pay the whole annual expenses of several towns, there the problem begins to press upon us—how to deal with such inequalities and still preserve the spirit of a republic. Perhaps it is as well, while we are engaged in solving this problem, to have the responsibility of the very largest fortunes transferred from time to time to communities not troubled with the dream of social equality.

Again, if it be true, as even English liberals sometimes tell us, that the great show-places of Europe are worth what they cost to the whole community simply as public parks or pleasure-grounds, then there is no reason why

Americans, who certainly enjoy them even more than Europeans, should not contribute their share—beyond the entering sixpence—to keep them up. Both countries were in a manner the losers, for instance, when the magnificent library at Blenheim was sold at auction to pay the debts of a spendthrift. It must always be remembered that individual wealth among Americans is greater in proportion than European wealth, because the latter is almost always encumbered with the necessity of keeping up costly establishments. Much of it, no doubt, will float back to Europe by change of residence or international marriages, and will serve either to keep up great historic places or for much worse purposes. But the problem of human civilization lies behind all this, and will perhaps transform all our notions of property itself within another hundred years.

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XXII

MORE MINGLED RACES

WHEN we see in New York city a group of stolid Russian Jews just landed, or notice a newly arrived party of gayly attired Italian women who are being conducted behind a shed by their friends that they may exchange their picturesque attire for second-hand American gowns, we are apt to be thankful that we are not such as they. Or when we hear of an arrival of Finnish stone-cutters at Gloucester, Massachusetts, or of Armenian iron-workers at Worcester, we reflect that the landing of the Pilgrims of 1620 was not just like theirs. But, after all, the Pilgrims landed; that is the essential point. They were not the indigenous race. They were poor; they were sometimes ignorant; some of their women could only make their mark instead of signing their names. At the best it is not very long since they landed, for what is two or three centu-

ries in the history of the human race? Tried by the standard of ancient races, we are all new-comers together; we are still pilgrims and sojourners, as our fathers were. Those of us who are of English blood represent a race so mingled and combined, so swept over by successive invasions and conquests, that it can claim no purity of strain, but only the strength of composite structure. Trace back the origin of the Dutch or the French Huguenot element, and it is much the same. The French Canadians who are now pouring in upon us, or the Jews from whatever quarter, have probably a less mingled descent than most of those who deprecate their arrival. If this be the standard, it is for them to criticise us, not for us to criticise them.

Whatever may be the right policy as to restricting immigration, it is always to be remembered that it is immigration, not natural increase, which has made the material greatness of this country. It is not the seventy persons residing in Chicago in 1830 who were the progenitors of the two million claimed by that city to-day. In a remarkable book, called *The New Rome, or the United States of the World*, published in New York fifty years ago, the authors, both Germans, described the mission

of the United States to be "the fusion of all nations—not of this continent alone, but of all continents—into one people." But as there can proverbially be no omelet without the breaking of eggs, so there can be no fusing of all nations except by bringing the nations here to be fused. If the patricians of those races will not come—and why should they, since they have more exclusive privileges at home? —we must accept the plebeians, in the knowledge that they may provide us with patricians in their grandchildren a century hence. Inasmuch as the ancestors of most of our present patricians were plebeians, why not? At any given moment the "society" of any American city or town looks like something fixed and permanent; people talk of "getting into it," as if it were a definite enclosure; but in reality it is about as fixed and definite as the waves of the sea. Any social upheaval sweeps through it as a heavy sea sweeps through the carefully laid seines and stake-nets of the fishermen along our coasts, sending into the nets a great deal which the fishermen never expected to find there. Of all nations this is the last where we can regard new-comers as anything but American in the making—a new supply of eggs, fresh or stale, to be broken for our omelet.

No test, no classification, can do very much to limit this supply. We have already laws to sift out criminals and paupers. But the most dangerous criminals are those who are not yet publicly known as such; and the most perilous paupers are those who arrive with no money of their own, but with some that has been plundered from other people. Moreover, those who are appalled by the aspect of the latest arrivals are apt to forget the looks of some that preceded them. Those early squalid crowds have simply vanished in their descendants. Who that sees the vast and well-dressed congregations that come and go to our Roman Catholic churches can recall the advance-guard of the Irish immigration as it came among us sixty years ago—"poor Paddy, whose country is his wheelbarrow," as Emerson says, whose first act on arrival was to dig himself an earthen shanty, and live in it? Who that sees the equally prosperous French Canadian congregations pouring out of the great Roman Catholic churches of Fall River, Massachusetts, or Woonsocket, Rhode Island, can recall the Canadian families that used to cross the frontier forty or fifty years ago—a man, a woman, twelve children, and a large bundle? Each of those early migrations was a step in prog-

ress; as De Tocqueville pointed out in his day, a log hut in America was not a home, but a halting-place on the way to something better. Each type of new arrivals brought qualities of its own; the French Canadian was less energetic than the Irish, but less turbulent; the Irish more original and aggressive, but less temperate. All our Civil War scarcely brought to light such a phenomenon as an Irish coward; but when it came to the statistics of the guard-house the report was less favorable.

We err in assuming that any one race monopolizes all the virtues, or that the community only suffers with each new importation. The late Rev. Horatio Wood, who was for more than half a century city missionary at Lowell, and who watched the whole change from American to Irish factory girls, told me that in one respect it brought a distinct moral improvement: the ignorant Irish girls were more uniformly chaste than the Protestant farmers' daughters whom they superseded. Now the French Canadians have replaced the Irish; but a Protestant physician of great experience, whose practice included several large manufacturing villages, almost wholly French, told me that he had never known an illegitimate birth to occur there. At the old "North

End" of Boston, where Irish superseded Americans, and have now given place to Italians and Russian Jews, a city missionary has testified to a moral improvement from the change; the Italians, though quarrelsome, are temperate, and he says that he never saw a Jew intoxicated. No doubt the prisons show a larger proportion of foreigners than of natives, because the foreigners represent the poorer class and the less befriended class. But the eminent scoundrels, who are rich and shrewd enough to keep out of prison, are rarely foreigners; they are more often the native product, and use the others as their tools; one such successful swindler doing more real harm in the community than twenty men convicted of drunkenness or petty larceny. Even as to crimes of violence, it is not among the vehement Italians that lynchings occur, but in those portions of the Union least touched by foreign immigration. Let us make laws, then, to regulate those landing on our shores; but let us not forget that the ancestors of our lawmakers also landed here.

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XXIII

THE ALPHABET AS A BARRIER

THERE lies before me a document more than two centuries old, signed by the daughter of a Puritan clergyman, a woman who was also a minister's wife. She had what Dr. Holmes called Brahmin blood, for she probably descended, in the sixth generation, from the sister of Chaucer the poet, an ancestress described in the English family tree as "Caterina, soror Galfridi Chaucer, celeberrimi poetae Anglicani." This descendant of Caterina lived in Salem, Massachusetts, during the witch period; and it is on record that some of the poor imprisoned creatures petitioned that their cases might be taken from the jurisdiction of the courts and referred to her for decision. She reared a large family, and many conspicuous men in church and state, army and navy, all over this land, are descended from her. The great and almost startling pe-

culiarity of the commonplace legal document which bears her name is that, like many mothers in Israel of that period, she did not sign it personally, but could only make her mark. All that long and beneficent life, it seems, was not accompanied by the ability to write her name.

This astounding fact not only illustrates the complete change in women's educational position, but it bears on other social problems. The writer spent an evening in Kansas, forty years ago, with a woman of noble appearance, a Virginian by birth, who was stated to be the first woman who had come to dwell in that Territory. She had reared a dozen or fifteen sons and daughters, most of whom had accompanied her and her husband to make homes in the newly opened region. She was still in magnificent health, large and strong, with a fine head and face, and most intelligent bearing. She might have sat to some sculptor for his symbolic group of "The Pioneers." Yet this fine creature could neither read nor write. Many of the colored men who enlisted in our army during the Civil War showed the same combination of natural force and leadership with the same ignorance; and there has been at least one President of the United States

who could not read and write until he grew to maturity, and then learned it from his wife. The complaint is very general at the South (though I am satisfied of its being premature) that the older men and women among the blacks, who were wholly illiterate, had more vigor and trustworthiness than their better-educated children. The same discrimination is often made at the North, justly or unjustly, in favor of the first Irish immigrants as compared with their more enlightened descendants.

Who that recalls the war for the Union does not remember how we all, from President Lincoln downward, played upon the string of "the open doors of this nation," its being "a home for all oppressed mankind"? Lowell again referred to this in that magnificent "Commemoration Ode," which is the high-water mark of American poetry, and which no Englishman, except perhaps Hughes and Bryce, was ever yet able to appreciate or even understand. How fearlessly we then appealed to the Germans, the Irish, the Swedes, the Scotch, within our borders, and how well they responded? Even the green flag of Ireland, now forbidden to be displayed from our City Halls — and perhaps wisely — was then

welcomed with cheers on battle-fields when it was borne to the front, amid decimated regiments, under shouts of "*Faugh a Ballagh*"—Clear the Way. It is a thing almost certain that if a foreign war were declared to-morrow, all projects for an educational test would fall to the ground. We should instinctively recognize them as inappropriate.

It is a curious fact that against the race least popular as immigrants an educational test would count for nothing, since every Chinese can read and write. We also see through their example, as through that of the Irish and French-Canadian immigrants who preceded them, how short-lived an argument is that based upon their living too economically and so underselling their predecessors. Does any one now complain that Irish families stint themselves in food and clothing, or that Irish cooks and chambermaids do not ask and obtain as high wages as anybody else? No race ever yet submitted to privation merely for the love of it. No path proves so easy as that in the direction of profusion; even the Indian wishes to live as more luxurious hunters live, and Thoreau found in the Maine woods that his aboriginal guide was the only one of the party who remembered to bring a

rubber coat. More important is the question, finally, whether it is not true that, as even the Buddhists say, "all men are brethren"; and whether we have a right to do what we so long condemned the Chinese and Japanese for doing—namely, to build a wall round our borders and exclude all the rest of mankind.

(1896)

XXIV

ON THE NATURAL DISAPPROVAL OF WEALTH

THERE is a natural feeling of distrust and even disapproval of wealth, especially on the part of those who have never possessed it. It is natural also that this should be a sliding scale, and that each person should regard the next largest tax-payer as too rich. Thirty years ago, at the sea-side resort called Pigeon Cove, or Cape Ann, there was a village wit known habitually as Old Knowlton, a retired fisherman, who delighted to corner in argument a set of eminent clergymen who then resorted there, as Dr. Chapin, Dr. Gannett, Dr. Bartol, Thomas Starr King, and others. He liked to swear before them, to ask hard questions out of the Old Testament, and to call them familiarly by their last names. One day he was much startled, on asking about Dr. Gannett's salary, to hear that it was $3000,

which would not now be regarded as a large sum, but seemed to him enormous. "Why, Gannett," said the licensed veteran, "what can a minister do with so much money? You can't know how to manage it! Gannett, you ought to have a guardeen!"

No doubt we are all ready, if we personally escape wealth, to offer advice as to its guardianship, but probably the nearer we came to it, the greater the difficulty of deciding how to handle it. There is nothing new in the phenomenon, except in its lately rapid increase among ourselves. Even now it is said that no American is quite so rich as Cecil Rhodes, the South African adventurer, who is wealthy enough to organize piratical expeditions into free states; and, it is predicted, to be elevated to the peerage of England, even after they have failed. No American family is so rich as the Rothschilds, whose nest is still shown—or was till lately—a tottering and shabby house in the Jewish quarter of Frankfort. Matthew Arnold, who shook his head over the comparatively moderate displays of wealth in this country, gloats with delight, in two letters, over the luxurious living of the English Rothschilds. But we all like to philosophize about luxury and give it ad-

vice—and all the more the less we share of it; just as it was said of Cardinal de Retz, that he made up for an utter neglect of his own soul by exercising an abundant supervision over the souls of other people.

There is doubtless a great drawback on all the direct good done by great riches, although in many respects one has to recognize this good. Mr. Edward Atkinson thinks that all the Vanderbilt wealth is not, as such things go, too large a commission for its founder to have earned by the actual cheapening of the freight on each barrel of flour from the West to the East. It is usually claimed by the advocates even of mercantile trusts that, though the immediate effect of such organizations is to raise the price of the necessaries of life, the trusts tend to lower them in the end by methodizing and cheapening the production. Then the socialist also usually maintains that all such tendencies are to be helpful at last, because they prepare the way for public ownership, which is what he desires. But the trouble remains, after all, that it is not for these reasons that men really admire wealth or seek it. They do this simply because it is wealth. In all ages of the world it has been its intrinsic quality that dazzled. "Put money in thy

purse." There is no doubt a preference in the community for honesty, even on a large scale; and a stigma often attaches to ill-gotten wealth during a man's lifetime. He knows, however, that it will not extend to his children, and that they will have as little reason to trouble themselves about its origin as an English duke troubles himself about the possible shame of the ancestor who laid the foundation of the family.

There are undoubtedly many rich men who honestly feel great doubts as to the rightfulness of their unequal position. Very frank and noble expressions of this feeling might be quoted. The other perplexity, however, comes in—as to what they are to do about it. Even if they give millions to colleges and libraries and public buildings, it does not satisfy their critics, and perhaps does not quite satisfy themselves. Ought they not to use their money, in some way, towards remedying the very inequality that has created it? But that way bewilderment lies. In some little Judean village the text "Sell that ye have, and give alms," might be literally interpreted. For a large and highly organized community any such literal interpretation would be disastrous. It is hard to conceive of a greater

calamity in a town than to have some remorseful multi-millionaire turn his whole property into dollars and sprinkle them broadcast in the public streets. The tramps and waifs of the nation would rapidly gather in that town, and all honest and frugal life would be at an end. To invest the money in novel enterprises, even for the public good, might be almost as hopeless; because the whole theory of social progress is still so imperfectly worked out that the first attempts must for years be failures. No wonder that the rich man, even if conscientious, is puzzled, and, if fresh from the reading of Howells's *Altruria*, yet postpones his actual experiments until Edward Bellamy and Henry George have reconciled their warring projects.

What socialists find it hard to recognize is that personal wealth rarely comes by accident, but in most cases by natural leadership, by skill, or by inheritance from skill. Of course the rich man uses the laws of nature and the general progress of society, but the trouble is that he often uses them with an ability which his neighbors cannot supply in his place. Corporations do not pay salaries of twenty thousand dollars because it amuses them, but because the man whom they pay is worth that

to them. If not, he is dropped very rapidly. We have to deal with a world where certain men are born with a certain gift. It is, of course, nobler where a man consecrates that gift to the service of man or the glory of God; where he prefers to live concealed and do his work. Such men are around us all the time, but from the very nature of the case we do not hear much about them. Prominent usefulness soon attracts the reporters and the begging letters. On the other hand, a man may be grandly useful and yet have a petty desire to advertise himself, as it appears from the newly published memoirs of Louis Agassiz that George Peabody once offered to endow a great museum munificently if his own name could be attached to it, and withheld the gift when that proposal was declined.

(1896)

XXV

THE COMPLAINT OF THE POOR

IT is impossible for a prosperous and comfortable person to understand the point of view of the dissatisfied—whether in the case of the ordinary socialist or of Mr. Howells—without keeping in mind such facts as the following, which the writer happens to know pretty directly: A poor cobbler was troubled, as many men are, with an insatiable love of mechanical invention; and this was finally concentrated on a mechanism for "tying and binding" in connection with a "reaper." It was for a need then very imperfectly filled, and promised great rewards if successful. He worked at it for years, impoverishing his family for it, until his wife implored him to give it up altogether. Getting it at last, however, into final shape, he carried it to one of the chief establishments which manufactured reapers, and offered it for inspection and sale.

After a little examination it was rejected decisively as being too complicated; the inventor went home in despair, put his model away under his bench, and promised his wife to abstain from inventions thenceforward. A few weeks or months passed, and a shabby man one day came to the door asking to see it, and saying that he himself had invented a reaper, and it might be worth while for them to join forces. Pulling out the rejected model from under the bench, the inventor showed it, and finally sold it for a small sum to the visitor. It turned out afterwards that the shabby man was an employé of the great establishment which had nominally rejected the invention, and had taken this mean way to buy it for a song. It has since proved immensely profitable. If taxed with the trick, those concerned would simply reply that business was business, and each man must look out for himself.

This precise story may not be true, though it rests on good authority. That it might be true there is no question. It is the possibility of its being true which vitiates all theories of the dignity of wealth. If wealth were, as is sometimes asserted, simply the cumulative result of industry, patience, and honesty, it would not be hard to treat it with a certain reverence.

Where one man has grown rich by economy, energy, and skill, and another has grown or remained poor by indolence or incapacity, there wealth seems to denote qualities that claim respect, and men do not grudge the deference shown to it. It is because men of any experience all know instances to the contrary, and have watched the many examples of tricks like that applied to this poor cobbler, that they denounce all wealth as a fraud upon the community. Sow a victim, and you reap a socialist.

Yet it is so difficult to resist the prestige of success, and so easy to believe the great man to be also good, that people are not, in the individual case, very critical. It is easy to convince one's self that gossip is malicious, that one does not know all the details. At any rate, in the next generation the facts grow wholly vague; they represent old scandal; they no more vitiate the inheritor of a fortune than the nobleman or noble lady of to-day, in England or Austria, is vitiated in reputation by the fact that the original dukedom or earldom may have been bought by the dishonor of an ancestor. But all this, or even the fact that the privileged position is well used, does not usually propitiate the mind of the socialist

or even of the philosophic critic. His question is whether the money of the so-called benefactor is to be regarded as an actual gift or as an act of restitution—giving back to the community its rightful share hitherto withheld. If these benefactors were really public-spirited—thus the malcontents reason—they would not object to an income-tax, for instance, which would put the gift in a more unequivocal form. Probably there never was a time or place where more money was spent than is devoted here and now, by rich men, for the benefit of the community. The trouble is that the wealth increases in spite of it, and so does poverty. Moreover, the wealth does not get the credit of what it really does. Its occasional follies and extravagances and titled marriages are before all men's eyes; its acts of benevolence are less advertised, and not so interesting for purposes of gossip. Many men of profuse generosity are really simple and retiring in personal habits, but these are usually ignored. The only American millionaire whom one finds habitually reverenced in the more radical newspapers is Peter Cooper, and this not so much for the money he spent as for the way he spent it; and, in part, from his greenback and other theories.

It is impossible not to recognize that much of the distrust of wealth on the part of the poor has come from the mere increase of the figures employed to describe it; that we count by millions instead of by thousands, and that the word multi-millionaire has become necessary. Greville records, fifty years ago, the registering of a will bequeathing the largest fortune ever known in England—over a million pounds, or five million dollars. Only that! It is a great step from this to the period when all the newspapers condoled with the daughters of a single American family for being limited by their father's will to ten million dollars apiece. There was such a general expression of sympathy that one expected to see a proposal to take up collections for them in Sunday-schools or by penny-in-a-slot boxes. Since then, moreover, the maximum figure of wealth has increased so rapidly that it haunts the imagination, especially of the poor. All the old theories, as that wealth would be limited, in this country, by the absence of primogeniture, or checked by cutting off the old sources of supply, such as the India trade—all these have vanished. Then the question recurs, for those who are poor and philosophers at the same time, what is the outcome to be? It is

almost as difficult to reconcile the principles of republican society with the existence of billionaires as of dukes. Meanwhile, as to the question of outcome, the most courageous theorizers differ fundamentally. Henry George and Edward Bellamy agree as to the disease, but prescribe remedies almost absolutely opposite. It is perhaps fortunate that it is so, for it gives people time to open their eyes and to think.

(1896)

XXVI

SUMMER PEOPLE AND COUNTY PEOPLE

IN that very interesting book *The English Peasant*, by Richard Heath, the author chooses as his starting-point the fourteenth century, and calls his second chapter "In Worse than Egyptian Bondage." He selects, as the crowning instance of the social extremes of that period, the account given by the old historian Holinshed of the Earl of Leicester's expenses in 1313. This earl, it seems, spent on "his family and people" an amount equal to the wages of 1825 laborers. But in a newspaper statement about an American multi-millionaire, lately dead, it is said that he spent on "his family and people" about $2000 a day, which is more than would be earned in many branches of industry by 1825 laborers. If this be an illustration, it would appear that all the science and art of five centuries have not essentially diminished the disproportion which

Mr. Heath calls Egyptian bondage. Yet there has been a period between the two dates when no such extreme disproportion existed. In the American colonial period, for instance, or during the early days of the republic, there was nothing like this vast remoteness between poverty and wealth. It all illustrates what has often been pointed out—the human life does not move in a straight line, nor yet in a circle, but in a spiral, which reproduces the old position, but on a higher plane.

In another form we find a seeming reversion, as our society advances, towards the earlier social structure from which we thought ourselves freed forever. If there was anything which seemed distinctively American, it was the local ownership which almost universally prevailed in our farming regions. So marked was this, that the old manor system, which prevailed along the banks of the Hudson, collapsed almost of itself at last, giving way to the general demand for personal proprietorship. But recent statistics furnished by the Census Bureau to the Springfield *Republican* show the gradual change going on in all parts of the country, by which the holdings of land are increasing, and with them the proportion of tenant occupation. In Maine, where the altera-

tion is comparatively small, the number of tenant cultivators has increased in a decade from 2780 to 4731, while the freehold families have declined from 61,528 to 57,081. In Massachusetts the tenant families have increased from 3100 to 5206, while the freehold farmers have declined from 35,266 to 29,370. Iowa, in the same time, has gained 3521 "owning cultivators," but has also gained more than 16,500 tenant cultivators. Georgia reaches the climax with a loss of 3844 "owning cultivators," and an increase of 39,906 tenant families. In short, everything points towards that landlord system which we thought we had escaped, and away from that system of personal proprietorship which we thought our stronghold. The present writer well remembers to have heard precisely this change predicted, more than forty years ago, by that very able man Orestes A. Brownson, but the remark was received almost with derision. No one could deride it now, however we may explain it.

In many cases, no doubt, the advent of the gentleman farmer is a positive gain to all the agriculture of the neighborhood. He has travelled and studied more, even if he has worked less; he tries experiments for others, and runs

risks which they would not attempt. They laugh at him openly, and imitate him on the sly. They profit by his failures, and they usually have to admit that his milk and butter bring higher prices than theirs, and are worth it. But in one respect the gentleman farmer is an insecure possession to a community; there is never any guarantee for his permanence. He who has to make a living off his farm is anchored to it, but he to whom it is an amusement may quit it next year, and leave his land untilled. Again, the presence of the summer visitor emphasizes social differences to a degree far beyond what before existed in the rural regions. The ladies of the summer families do not meet the villagers and the farmers' households on a basis quite so frank as that on which the men meet. They contribute unconsciously many suggestions as to new bonnets, and they may be wholly friendly and public-spirited; but, after all, the social difference is more emphasized. The very fact that it is intangible makes it more difficult to suspend it occasionally, as is done in England at certain harvest balls and the like, or as used to be done in our Southern States sometimes at the marriage of some privileged slave. The "summer families" are coming more and more

to take in our country towns a position not unlike that of the "county families" or "county people" in England; and a novel like Hope's *A Change of Air*, which acutely analyzes this classification in England, suggests curious analogies for the American reader, to whom the varying social currents of his own land have an interest beyond what any English novelist can imagine.

(1896)

XXVII

THE ANTIDOTE TO MONEY

ONE can hardly read the letters from Europe describing fashionable society without discovering that it is perfectly possible for Americans, even those who have been regarded at home as rather vulgar and pushing, to get at least far enough in the English circles of fashion to see and describe the grandest functions. How the knowledge is obtained is not the question. Like the snubbed man of the world in the inimitable *Dolly Dialogues*, these witnesses may at least claim that if they do not meet Lord Mickleham socially they know his valet. Even in the smaller field of America it is known that old John, the black head-waiter at the Ocean House, in Newport, used to furnish regular material for certain lady journalists by his hints of conversations overheard, reminiscences of family history, and even descriptions of dress. In a more highly devel-

oped fashionable life in England, John appears in the form of some impoverished cousin of a countess, or one of those "led-captains" of whom we read in old English novels. As our war correspondents during the Civil War used frankly to avow that they picked up incidents from deserters or "intelligent contrabands," and described them as personal observations; so any capable woman, trained by long practice, can no doubt extract from the very outskirts of a Queen's Drawing Room materials for a minute inventory of the Duchess of Marlborough's diamonds, with incidental remarks quoted from the "dear duchess" or from "a former lady of honor."

We are steadily outgrowing the impression that wealth is a peculiarly American institution, or exerts its chief charms in this country. The love of it is hardly to be called a transplanted taste, for its spell is as old as the history of the world and as wide as the earth's circumference. There is nowhere a tribe so savage in Asia or Africa that the prestige of power does not attach itself to those who have more horses, more camels, or more wives than their fellows. But the thing which gives the utmost prestige to wealth is its power to intrench itself in the form of hereditary aristoc-

racy. Great wealth is, in its last analysis, powerless to obtain great social prizes in America, because there are no such prizes. It can at the utmost spend a great deal of money for a while, but that is all it can do. Let us suppose that it can even buy a Presidency—but what is that? Four years of torment, and then "the rest is silence." Apart from this, the American wealth must transplant itself to get peculiar and exclusive social enjoyments. This fact is a great compliment to America.

People who have no visible imagination in any other direction are always ready to be imaginative in their reverence for an hereditary class; and do not see that it is and must be in all but a very small proportion of cases the mere embodiment and perpetuation of wealth. "All families," says Lord Murray in Scott's *Monastery*, "have sprung from one mean man." There occurred a promotion, sometimes the result of great services, but oftener of magnificent bribes, great frauds, or a woman's shame—all these being measurable in money. In the English titled classes we see a constant transfer of untitled riches, if used for the right political party, into ennobled wealth. It is largely a more gilded and veneered Tammany. Witness the matter-of-

course comment of the London *Spectator* on the honors bestowed by the British government on the last Queen's birthday. "Lord Salisbury was not distributing them eccentrically, but according to the regular custom, taking wealthy squires like Mr. E. Heneage and Colonel Malcolm of Poltalloch for his peerages; and giving baronetcies to Mr. R. U. P. Fitzgerald, W. O. Dalgleish, Mr. Lewis McIver, Mr. J. Verdie, and Mr. C. Cave, because they are wealthy men who have done service to the party." * The *Spectator* is, on the whole, the ablest of the great English weeklies, and the fairest; it is not at present opposing Lord Salisbury, nor is it saying this by way of censure. In what respect does all this differ from the methods of Tammany?

There is nothing new about it; in the *Greville Journals* (July 2, 1826) the writer reports: "A batch of peers has been made; everybody cries out against Charles Ellis's peerage (Lord Seaford); he has no property and is of no family. . . . However, it is thought very ridiculous." But it is evident that it was only the want of wealth that made it ridiculous; and yet this appointment was made by Canning.

* *Spectator*, May 23, 1896.

Perhaps Tweed and Croker managed it better in their own way, for they appointed men, not because they were already rich, but that they might become so. In either case, after the thing was done, who cared for its being thought ridiculous? Certainly not the Englishman, for he obtained by it far more than any American could give or receive. Mere money perishes with the spending and may not found a family, but the owner of a peerage bought with money cannot help founding a family, except by remaining childless. A peer may sink to the lowest depths of poverty or of sin, and yet know that some grateful heiress is waiting somewhere eager to marry his heir. This climax of wealth is English, not American; it is only that this country has lately taken to supplying the heiresses.

When we complain even of the political influence of wealth among ourselves, we forget how recently it is that anything but wealth has been represented, not merely in the British House of Lords, but in the House of Commons. John Bright said at Birmingham, thirty years ago (1867): "I am not able to say what it has cost to seat those 658 members in that House, but if I said that it has cost them and their friends a million of money [pounds], I should

say a long way below the mark. I believe it has cost more to seat those 658 men there than to seat all the other representative and legislative assemblies in the world. . . . There are many members who pay always from £1000 to £15,000 for their election." This vast expenditure has been much diminished by the present admirable English laws against bribery, but enough remains, especially when we consider that English legislators are not, like ours, salaried, and must therefore either be taken wholly from a very well-provided class or else kept in public life, like the Radical and Irish members, by special contribution. It is really a very simple matter, though it puzzled Matthew Arnold, that men and women who take the English view that wealth is primarily a means of personal luxury should live in Europe. How can they help it? To those who incline, however moderately, to what is still a very common American view, that wealth is to be viewed as being in a manner a public trust, there seems every reason why they should live at home, and why, moreover, even their daughters should wish to do this. The only real antidote to wealth, all the world over, lies in the pursuits of intellect and the desire to do good. As for hereditary rank,

it is no antidote to wealth, but merely a means of concentrating and perpetuating its power. Was there ever such a carnival of mere wealth, for instance, as at the coronation of the Emperor of Russia?

(1896)

XXVIII

THE REALLY INTERESTING PEOPLE

A NEWLY arrived English authoress, sitting beside an American author at the dinner-table a few years since, looked up and said to him with the cheerful frankness of her nation, "Isn't it a pity, don't you think, that all the really interesting Americans are dead?" It was not, perhaps, a very encouraging inducement for a surviving American to make himself interesting; and probably the talk which followed became a series of obituaries. As a matter of fact, it always seems as if the interesting people had just passed away, as in any town it always seems as if the really fine trees had lately died or had been cut down. But, as Goethe remarked, the old trees must fall in order to give the younger growth a chance; and it would be wiser to say that the really interesting people are always those who survive. The younger they are, indeed, the more

interesting. The older ones have been gauged and measured; they may yet, while they live, do something better than they have ever done, but it will be essentially in the same lines. Gladstone goes on with his statesmanship and his scholarship to the end of life; so did Holmes with his inexhaustible sparkle; but their work did not change; we knew what was coming. The interest of the younger generation lies in the fact that we never know just what to expect from them. If we had looked at the late eminent philologist, Professor William D. Whitney, of Yale University, as he appeared in youth, we should have seen a promising geologist; if we had looked at his brother, Professor J. D. Whitney, of Harvard, we should have seen a rising philologist. At a certain period of life they exchanged pursuits; the student of languages gave his brother a Sanscrit grammar, and took in exchange his geological tools. Nothing that either has accomplished, although both have done much, is more essentially interesting than this early interchange of life-work.

Fortunately for all concerned, there is always a period, even in America, when the young look with a certain admiration and envy on the old, and sometimes, for five min-

utes at a time, would even change places with them. The old discreetly hold their tongues and accept the sort of supremacy thus forced upon them. So long as they say nothing, the mistaken impression stands. Sir Robert Walpole, who lived to be nearly eighty, remarked of his coeval, Lord Tyrawley, "Tyrawley and I have been dead for two years, but we don't tell anybody." Long before reaching that point it occurs to most persons that, after all, the world belongs to the young, and not to those who seem to control it; the elders have still the nominal ownership, but they are only, as the phrase is, tenants by the courtesy, and in a few days or hours the whole governing body will be essentially different. In some persons this causes a languid indifference to a world so soon to slip from their grasp; in others it creates an almost excessive eagerness for handling the tools of thought or action to the last. But in either case they are brought to the same conclusion, that the really interesting people are the youngsters, and not themselves.

The curious thing is that, while the elders are thus meditating, the young people are looking forward with fear and solicitude, and wondering how they shall ever be able to fill the

places of these dignified figures who are sitting, as in Friends' Meeting, "on the high seats." How little we know, in maturity, of the struggles and terrors of the young! As they look out into the world they see all its problems and difficulties at their full dimensions, or perhaps exaggerated, while the wings are yet undeveloped by which they themselves are perhaps to float airily over all these obstacles. A small boy of my acquaintance once lay awake in tears after an overdose of Miss Martineau's once famous *Illustrations of Political Economy*, because he did not see how he should ever be able to pay his rent when he became a man; and a little girl wept yet more wildly, beyond all control of her nurse, because she did not know whether, if she died, there would be anybody to attend her funeral. We can smile at these childish solicitudes from the safe vantage-ground of maturer years. But not a year passes without some unexplained tragedy in the newspapers; — some college student or recent graduate, usually a person of good abilities and unstained character, fills his home with anguish by an unexplained suicide in his hotel chamber. Could we look behind the scenes we might perhaps find the explanation to lie in some fancied helplessness, as un-

founded as these childish tears, in the outlook on life of this maturer child. With the world before him to enjoy, to help, or to conquer, he finds himself paralyzed with doubts whether he can fill his place. Life alone could test him; but that test he shrinks from applying, and takes refuge in death.

The interest of the world lies in the fortunes of the young. The great works of humanity are still to be accomplished; the great book written; the great picture painted; the great city or nation governed. It is not the nineteenth century, but the twentieth, which now becomes interesting. We turn for a theme to the coming generation; but we must not, like that member of Congress who announced himself as "addressing posterity," be charged with talking so long that our audience will arrive in season to hear us.

(1896)

XXIX

ACTS OF HOMAGE

THE members of that highly respectable semi-military association, "The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company" of Boston, will probably be rather amused—if their arduous military and civic duties permit any moments of levity—to hear that their pleasant little London outing was regarded by high editorial authority in that city as an act of international "homage." In the narrative written, apparently by one of the corps, in a Boston newspaper, her Majesty the Queen was described as "a pleasant-faced old lady," who received them very cordially. This seems rather to recall the descriptions given of dignitaries by Major Jack Downing, in the last generation, who was habitually on easy terms with them, and yet would hardly have regarded it as an act of homage even when he pulled off General Jackson's boots. Yet we are distinctly

assured by the *Spectator* (July 11), which is on the whole the most reasonable of the great London weeklies, that "it was no small honor [for the Queen] to receive thus the homage of New England, and to feel that she was greeted not merely as the Queen of England, but of the English race." It is worth while to know at last what was the equivalent supposed to be given for all these receptions at Windsor Castle, these reviews at Aldershot. The Americans were supposed to bring "homage" from a once rebellious colony, now grown to a nation. It is a good thing to understand this. Hereafter, when the Worshipful Society of London Fish-mongers or the Fabian Society visits this country and is "received" by the Mayor of New York, we shall know that he is receiving in turn the homage of England, and is greeted not merely as the head of Tammany Hall, but of the English-speaking race.

Leaving these various dignitaries and delegations to settle their own affairs, one may be permitted to point out that there has been of late, especially among those disapproving the President's Venezuela policy, a touch of this kind of homage. Never have there been so many compliments to the position and policy of England, so many implied pledges to rally

round her flag, boys. This may be all very well, but when it takes the form of extreme deference, one may well smile and draw the line. It is partly, no doubt, a reaction after that intense feeling of aroused nationality which accompanied and followed our great Civil War, and can hardly, perhaps, be sustained in full by the next generation. The day after Lincoln's emancipation proclamation was issued, or after his Gettysburg speech, or after his assassination, there was little disposition visible among us to regard that estimable sovereign, Queen Victoria, as the Queen of the English-speaking race; nor would even the *Saturday Review* have made that suggestion. As the War of 1812 was called by many "the Second War of the Revolution," so might the Civil War be almost called the "Third War," in respect to the completeness of the feeling of independence, not to say of isolation, that it created for a time. It is one of the incidental benefits to set against the vast evils of war that it gives this sense of self-reliance. "When is man strong," says Browning in one of his finest passages, "but when he feels alone?"

It is very natural, perhaps, that after a period so exalted there should come a little reaction

in the direction of colonialism. This we may see both in literature and in manners. "Are we not provincial? Do we not lack the manners of the great world?" These are the questions anxiously asked. Yet all the manners of the great world are but little affairs of spoons and napkins and visiting-cards compared with those essential ingredients of manners which lie in "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control"; and which may be acquired in a log cabin or a sod shanty or an Indian tepee from parents who know their business. Given this foundation, the great world can add much in respect to minor details; but without this foundation the teachings of the great world can do little. Addison, pointing this same moral in his day, goes so far as to say, "If you want to know a man who has seen the world, you will know him by his deficiency in those characters which seem to belong to good society." It is a curious fact that where a foreigner in his published book selects for special praise the manners and bearing of some American, it is very apt to turn out that the person thus praised has never crossed the ocean, or not till middle life, when his manners and bearing were already formed. On the other hand, some of the very rudest Ameri-

cans one encounters are often those who have seen much of courts and have simply a suit of artificial manners, which they can very easily, on the smallest provocation, lay aside. When the late Richard Grant White went for the first time to England, in middle life, he was described by the London press as having "the figure of a guardsman and the bearing of a duke." Yet he always maintained that the very finest manners he had ever encountered were those of his grandfather, a modest clergyman in Connecticut.

It is very much the same with our literary phase. Young Americans go to London, catch the latest fashions and the latest slang of the literature of the day, learn the names of a great many authorlings who are happily not yet reprinted in this country, and come back thinking, like Sim Tappertit and his fellow-revellers, that "there's nothing like life." They yearn to be cosmopolitan, whereas what they need is to be true men and women first, and let cosmopolitanism take care of itself. The most cosmopolitan American writers of the last generation were undoubtedly Willis and Bayard Taylor; but what has become of their literary fame? On the other hand, the American names one sees oftenest mentioned

land? How many know whether Guatemala and Yucatan adjoin each other, and which is north or south of the other? It is safe to say not one in a thousand. Nay, how many Eastern citizens even know the relative positions on the map of Wyoming, Idaho, and Arizona, or can state without much reflection the comparative sizes of New York and Nevada? At an examination of teachers in a New England city, scarcely one could be found who knew where Cape Malabar was; some were wholly ignorant, others thought it must be in the East Indies, whereas it is in reality the southeastern point of Massachusetts. If we ourselves are thus easily perplexed by questions in our own national geography, can we reasonably expect a visitor from the Thames or the Tweed to know more?

The things which add interest to special localities are either their ancestral associations or their connection with great names or their works of art, including buildings. Of the last we have as yet but few to show; in that respect we still go to Europe, if only as Robinson Crusoe went to his wreck, to bring away what we can find. Even the World's Fair at Chicago did not, as was expected, draw shoals of foreigners to visit it. Then, of course, the

ancestral ties run all in the other direction; no European crosses the Atlantic to visit the tomb of his great-grandfather. But not only do we go to Europe for that pious aim: the fifty-six thousand Christian Endeavorers who lately visited Boston spent a large part of their time in the old cemeteries; they might be seen in all directions taking duplicate charcoal impressions of the tombstones of John Hancock and Paul Revere and Franklin's parents and the somewhat mythical Mother Goose. The historic impulse, unlike the star of empire, takes its way eastward; we go back to the regions our fathers deserted, precisely because they deserted them. The feeling of our newer States towards the older ones is like that of the inhabitants of those older States towards Europe, a mingling of filial affection and jealousy. In the popular Chicago tale of *Sweet Clover* a young girl says, sadly, "I wonder if I shall ever go East; to New York, Boston, Philadelphia; I should like them to be something beside names to me—but what an idea!" This is essentially the feeling with which other Americans look towards Europe.

It is when the ties of literary association begin to form that older and newer communities come to be more on an equality. We go

to England to hear Shakespeare's lark sing at heaven's gate; and Thomas Hughes came to America to hear Lowell's bobolink. These ties again are formed very slowly, and the colonial spirit still lingers so much among us that a very little English reputation goes farther in the United States than a much higher American fame in England. Yet here we are sometimes startled with the discovery that we are also interesting to our elder cousins, as well as our elder cousins to us. Twenty-five years ago the present writer, visiting Europe for the first time, began with the city of Cork, and stood delighted before the humble sign "Fishamble Lane," because it recalled the song whose burden was,

"Misthress Judy McCarthy of Fishamble Lane."

On mentioning this a day or two after, in London, to that fine old Irish abolitionist, the late Richard D. Webb, he received it with sympathy, and said that he felt just so when he first saw the sign "Madison Square" in New York and thought of Miss Flora McFlimsey. It was pleasant to find that we too had some small poetic associations to be exported, so that we could restore the balance of trade.

It is a pity that we should now be beginning

to complain of our foreign visitors, not for knowing too little about us, but for knowing too much. Thus Madame Blanc, whose book on *The Condition of Women in the United States* justly criticises American women as knowing little of the history of any country except England and America, has been herself reproved for the amount and variety of knowledge which she has crowded into these brief essays. We have probably never had such good criticisms of national ways and manners from any foreign woman, and it goes without saying that to do these things better than any woman is to do them better than any man. She has keenly pointed out faults as well as she has recognized merits; she does not applaud the architecture and decoration of the Woman's Building at Chicago, and fearlessly points out that "manner is far less important than matter in America, even in the eyes of those who call themselves artists." Yet she is spoken of by some leading journals as if she were a mere commonplace gossip, without earnestness or purpose; as if her visit to this country were not the culmination of a long series of services rendered to us, through the greatest of the world's reviews, in the translation of American authors and the elucidation

of our social system. We still show national weakness in our over-sensitiveness. Probably all Europe cannot afford any one better fitted than Madame Blanc to discuss precisely those aspects of American life which she touches. And when we consider that it is only a few years since Mr. Philbrick, our Educational Commissioner at the Paris Exposition of 1878, complained that he had never yet found a Frenchman who could be convinced that any American woman had ever studied Greek, we ought to be grateful to the French woman who has at last spoken with knowledge.

(1896)

XXXI

THE PREJUDICE IN FAVOR OF RETIRACY

MISS ALCOTT, when serving as nurse in a soldiers' hospital, justified her demand of a small curtain for her chamber window on the fact of "the female mind having a prejudice in favor of retiracy during the nightcapped periods of existence." But the truth is that if people could only be induced to believe it, such a prejudice exists not only for women, but for many men also, and during much more extended periods. An able Western critic, a lady, writes in despair that of three different poets of her own sex whom she wished to include in a biographical article, every one has replied that she preferred not to give any personal details about herself. Two of these reside at the East, one at the West; all desire to earn a modest income by their poems, and all to some extent succeed; all readily admit that a page or two of personal gossip about

them would help their market, yet all with one accord make excuse. Is it to be accounted to them as a virtue or as a weakness? Their critic naturally thinks it rather a weakness; if they plunge into printer's ink, why not accept the consequences? But surely in the sympathetic breast there is something which pulsates in their defence.

The instinct of "retiracy" is not wholly limited to women. Tennyson, whom Lord Lytton called "Miss Alfred," in his day, says frankly of the poet generally, "His worst he kept, his best he gave," and pleads earnestly that all of his life except what he puts in print may be recognized as his own. Hawthorne, Emerson, Whittier, and many others have claimed a similar shelter. Longfellow confessed to a dislike to seeing his name in print. Swift, while seeming defiant of the world, read family prayers "in secret" in his household—"in a crypt," as Thackeray said—that they might not be talked about; not only retiring to the Scriptural closet, but taking his whole family there. Shakespeare, while engaged in the most conspicuous of all professions, yet kept his personality so well concealed that there are those who doubt to this day whether he wrote the plays which bear his name, and

no one has yet conjectured why he left only his second-best bedstead to his wife. Charles Lamb, when asked for personal details, could remember nothing notable in his own career except that he once caught a flying swallow in his hand. Campbell, the poet, was so shy that on receiving a compliment he would withdraw within his shell and say no more; he was afraid, as Irving finely said, of the shadow which his own fame cast before him. It would be easy to make up a long list of authors of eminence who have deprecated instead of encouraging all personal information, and who would have been eminently unfitted to live in an age or land of interviewers.

It is not apparent that there is any distinction of sex in this matter. The writer has seen a letter to a friend by an authoress not unknown to fame, or at least popularity, in which she points out that renown is almost wholly a matter of small newspaper items, and so encloses a written series of personal scraps about herself—her looks, voice, sayings, doings, and the like—for this friend to distribute among friendly editors. This is at the opposite extreme from the recusant poets who give so much trouble to their biographers. It would be well if some compromise could be made, as

was done by the traveller described by Dr. Franklin, who, on arriving in a strange city at once called upon the mayor with a printed slip stating his birthplace, age, height, occupation, destination, sect, political party, and the like, in the hope that, having supplied gossip with these essential facts, he might thenceforth be let alone. Yet it is doubtful whether this would present any serious obstacle to the enterprise of modern journalism; for, indeed, no matter how often a man's biography has been written, there always seems to be a lingering expectation that he can with a little trouble get up a wholly new one, having an entirely different set of incidents, for the latest historian.

If a greater personal shyness exists among literary persons than in any other occupation, it probably comes from the fact that the author, and especially the poet, feels more detached from his work, when done, than is the case with anybody else. His work comes to him as something outside of himself, and, when it is done, his ordinary life is but the nest from which that bird of fancy has flown. Why then should he dwell upon it, or give its precise measurements? The poem comes to him; he cannot sit down and make it by an

effort of will. It is strange to him that the word "poet" should mean "maker," when his experience is that the poem, even if a poor one, makes itself. Its production also affords a relief; and this explains the many cases where—as, in America, with Emily Dickinson and Francis Saltus—one may spend a whole lifetime in making verses, and yet let almost nothing be published until after death. This explains also why their own works often seem to authors so remote and worthless; they feel as an apple-tree might feel, if it were human, towards a barrel of its own apples of last season. When to all this is added a woman's lingering tradition of the seclusion due to her sex, it is not strange if authors of that sex hide themselves under initials or feigned names, and decline to publish autobiographies.

It is to be observed that those who, like Mr. Bellamy, put into type their dreams of an ideal future state, do not make it clear to us which way we are tending, whether to greater publicity or greater seclusion. Perhaps the more we are destined to have in common, the more we shall take refuge in what we can preserve of "retiracy." It is to be noticed that Fourier, the arch-organizer, in the midst of his elaborate "groups" and intricate "series,"

still recognizes the rights of individuality here and there; and preserves, amid all the inexorable machinery, some little corners where personal privacy may hold its own.

(1896)

XXXII

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ENNUI

THE Rev. Dr. Prince, of Salem, Massachusetts, who had a vein of old-fashioned eccentricity, used to include among his Sunday petitions the request that "all vacant young ministers might be provided with parishes." The prayer was in many cases heeded, and it is so, as we know, too frequently to this day; but times have changed, and youthful divines of this class are now punished with vacant pews. More solicitude is now found for the vacant young women, who are, the newspapers constantly tell us, ready to do almost anything to relieve ennui.

Suppose, for instance, that, as often happens, some young woman in what is called "society" wishes to go on the stage. She is, perhaps, a person of great and varied cultivation; has studied half a dozen languages and as many sciences; is intensely interested in photogra-

phy, in botany, in sociology, in art; is an accomplished musician; has been three or four times to Europe; and, to crown all, has a husband and a baby. Yet if she has also, or thinks she has, a gift for acting, she wishes to train herself as an actress; and the newspapers at once proclaim the fact far and wide, and draw the moral that she is seeking to escape ennui. Ennui? but she never had a lazy moment since she was born; there never was a moment when she had not more resources for a day than the hours of the day could fill; the struggle was not to find employment, but to choose among a myriad employments. What she has to contend with is not an empty garden, but one with too rich and varied a growth; and while she is wearing herself out with this struggle, she is supposed to be suffering for want of something to do! For ennui is defined in the dictionaries as being "languor of mind resulting from lack of occupation."

When we look further at it, one is tempted to doubt whether ennui is not, among us Americans, a tradition rather than a reality. Fortunately for the world, we know that certain sins die out as the world goes on; the fact of sin may remain, but the forms change. Ennui is not the vice of a new country, but

the slow malaria of an old one. For the purposes of this disease we are still too young. It is, according to Byron, a peculiarly English affliction, although the name be French:

"For ennui is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language; we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep cannot abate."

We have still too much of the Puritan in us, as a nation; have too many cares and duties and missions; we still work too hard and marry too young—for ennui, properly so called. We exhibit overwork, not underwork; our appointed disease is not ennui, but nervous prostration. It may be no better; it may even be worse; but it is a different thing.

When we think to escape Puritanism into the realms of fashion it is no better. Our civilization is not yet thoroughly adjusted for idle people; the wheels are not oiled; domestic service alone is a perpetual conflict. It is only in Europe that one has leisure for ennui. The situation which made until recently the staple of English novels was that which Mrs. Walford's story of *Mr. Smith* represents—that of a comfortably provided family, where half a dozen maidens toil not, neither do they spin,

but simply sit all day looking out of the window, watching for some rich stranger to come and marry them. This dreary condition finds as yet no counterpart in America. The great success of *Little Women* in England was largely due, no doubt, to the novelty of the situation there rendered—the family of maidens, all poor, all busy, all happy, and all content to wait to be wooed and won as it might please Providence. What with higher education and lectures and clubs and charity work, the difficulty is to find an unoccupied young woman in any family. That old life, so blameless and aimless, seems to have passed away. There are still plenty of maiden aunts, but they are not to be drafted into collateral service. Indeed, they turn out not even to outnumber the bachelors, since the statistics show that the 60,000 extra women of Massachusetts, for instance, are not maidens, but widows. Now the vocation of a widow, whatever else it may be, is surely not wont to be a vocation of ennui, but of care.

There are undoubtedly persons who are born tired, and there are women who were bored with their first dolls. These are exceptional, not normal. In this country, it may be laid down as a rule that youth of either

sex rarely suffers from ennui. It may still be found to some extent, doubtless, among maiden ladies living in boarding-houses, whose means are limited, yet just sufficient to relieve them from the wholesome necessity of exertion. It is to be found in greater degree among men similarly situated, living economically in small towns, forbidden to engage in business, lest they lose their little all, and dependent for occupation on the morning paper and the observation of other men's games of billiards at the club. Ennui is foreign to the habits of our people, and even to their temperaments; for, whatever it may be with the human race at large, it is certain that the native American of either sex inclines to work, not to idleness. The task of his physician is not to keep him busy, but to make him more idle. When he is too rich for convenience already, he keeps at work not so much to make more money as for sheer love of the game. He stays near the city, and does not, like the Englishman, become a landed proprietor and buy an estate in the country a dozen miles from any other estate.

As with the old, so with the young. The young clubmen of our cities are not simply swells, like their London prototypes; they must be bankers and speculators also. Pel-

ham and Vivian Grey and the Count d'Orsay have ceased to be prototypes; Barnes Newcome is the ideal. The American Van Bibber and Mr. Barnes of New York are merely far-off copies of him. To be sure, Thackeray says, "I do not know what there was about this young gentleman which inspired every one of his own sex with a strong desire to kick him," but it is very certain that he was not kicked for yielding to ennui. As to the other sex, we have the assurance of the highest living authority that in New York, at least, "unless a fashionable woman attends the opera three times a week, dines out seven days in the week, lunches daily at one house or another, and goes nightly to a ball or dance, she feels she is losing her time." But at least she cannot suffer from "languor of mind' resulting from lack of occupation."

(1896)

XXXIII

THE TEST OF TALK

WE are all unconsciously testing ourselves, all the time, for the information of those around us, and one of the most familiar tests is that of talk. Emerson says that every man reveals himself at every moment; it is he himself, and nobody else, who assigns his position.

> "Each the herald is who wrote
> His rank and quartered his own coat."

After spending an hour in the dark with a stranger, we can classify him pretty surely as to education, antecedents, and the like, unless he has had the wit to hold his tongue. In that case he is inscrutable. In Coleridge's well-known anecdote the stranger at the dinner-table would forever have remained a dignified and commanding figure, had not the excellence of the apple-dumplings called him for a moment forth from his shell to utter the fatal words,

"Them's the jockeys for me." After that the case was hopeless; he had betrayed himself in five words. Of course the speaker might still have been a saint or a hero at heart, but so far as it went the test was conclusive. In Howells's *Lady of the Aroostook* the young men were appalled at hearing the only young lady on board remark, as an expression of surprise, that she "wanted to know." It pointed unerringly, they thought, to a rusticity of breeding. In time she developed other qualities, and one or both of them fell in love with her; nevertheless, there was a certain justice in their inference. Holmes, varying an old line, says that "the woman who *cal'lates* is lost"; and it is undoubtedly true that we classify a new-comer, without delay, by his language.

What we do not always recognize is that there are grades in this classification. If a stranger begins by saying, "We was" or "He done it," we assign him a low place in the school-room of education. He may be a member of Congress, a college professor; no matter; the inference is the same. His morals, his natural intellect, may rank him far above our heads, yet on the side of refined training there is something to be missed. But a great many persons who would be far from any

such grammatical misadventures might still use smaller inelegancies which would also classify them in the ears of the fastidious. They might say, for instance, "cute," or "I don't know as," or "a great ways." Nine-tenths of us, according to Mr. Howells, would use some of these phrases, but there is no question that they will grate upon the ears of the other tenth. They do not touch the morals, the intelligence, the essential good manners, of those who utter them; they simply classify such persons as having reached a certain grade of cultivation, and no further. When heard, they cause a certain dismay, such as once came to an ardent young friend of mine, when, having climbed to the top of a stage-coach in order to be near a certain celebrated pulpit orator, not now living, she heard him remark to his little daughter, "Sis, do you set comfortable where you be?"

In his case, and in many such cases, this was probably a mere reversion to the habits of childhood, in familiar talk. It is not likely that he would have said the same in the pulpit. I have heard an eminent professor of rhetoric use language almost as lax when off his guard in his own class-room. This illustrates the fact that our talk is, after all, quite as much a matter of social training as of intel-

lectual instruction. We learn language mainly by ear, and speak good or bad English long before we have looked into a grammar. Hence young children, under refining influences, often avoid the inelegancies which their parents retain; and the improvement goes on from generation to generation. One may meet "in society" some young lady who is really very ignorant, and who has been too ill or too indolent to have more than a minimum of schooling, who yet habitually speaks more unexceptionable English than many a country schoolmaster or schoolmistress of twice her years and four times her real mental training. It is not altogether easy to explain this phenomenon, but there is no question about the fact. The mere practice of social usages is itself a school.

It is to be remembered, too, that the English language itself is a peculiarly whimsical and inconsistent one, where accuracy is largely a matter of good custom, and where mere grammatical consistency may often lead us astray unless we are constantly in touch with usage, and that the best usage. Thus, in writing, "into" is good form, but "onto" looks illiterate, although no reason can be given for the difference. Society finds "he

ain't" unpardonable; while "he don't," though still questionable, is excused. Then there are differences of locality. The educated American says "It is he," while the educated Englishman still perversely says "It is him," and tries to defend it. The same Englishman is astounded when he hears Americans say "gotten," and does not himself discover that it is an archaic phrase, Scriptural, but mainly disused in our Northern States, as in England, until it migrated from Virginia northward after the Civil War. One of the few phrases that still remain as the shibboleth of an Englishman is his saying "different to" instead of "different from." Another is "directly I went" rather than "directly after I went." It shows how skin-deep is our alleged Anglicism that we Americans hold our own so inflexibly on these points. Probably we are influencing the English in language more than they are affecting us, and not always beneficially; it is now, for instance, far more common to see "I expect" used for "I think" by a good English writer than by a good American writer. We are acquiring, it is to be hoped, something more of the English habit of clear and well-cut enunciation, but we are holding out fairly well against the deluge of the coarser

class of English words, such as "rot" and "beastly." Nor do we often emulate that high-born young English woman who informed a friend of mine, her hostess, at dinner, that the potatoes were nasty, and on being cautioned that in America we only apply this phrase to something very greasy and offensive, replied that this was precisely what she meant.

(1896)

XXXIV

OVERCLUBBABLENESS

THE word *clubbable* has come slowly into the dictionaries, though it originated with the prince of lexicographers, Dr. Samuel Johnson. Surely a word will soon be necessary to represent the higher degrees of *clubbableness*, so rapid is the growth, for both sexes, of this joint form of existence or action. Chinese and Japanese have their secret societies, and a net-work of these formed itself during the later Middle Ages in Europe; but never yet, and nowhere, probably, have quiet and respectable citizens plunged themselves so deeply into such organizations as here and now. Your neighbor unhappily dies some day. You had supposed him a placid and domestic man, known only to his own family and his fellow-clerks; but his obituary in the newspaper suddenly blossoms with mysterious initial letters and numbers, and his doors, on the day of the

funeral, are thronged with delegations; he was, it seems, a Knight Templar, and a member of some Royal Arch Chapter; he had taken the thirty-third degree of something; he belonged to Amity Lodge, I. O. O. F., and to the Mayflower Council of the Home Circle. Meanwhile there is printed on a parallel column the notice of some other recent death, and it is apologetically stated that the man "belonged to no organization, but was much respected for his qualities as a business man and a citizen." There is great expressiveness in that "but." It requires some explanation, it seems, if a man has ventured to die without an initiation, solemn or otherwise, into some secret order. Yet it is but charity to recognize that he may, after all, have lived a decent life.

The remarkable thing is that these innumerable societies, most of which began with some temporary separation of their members from their homes, have gradually been conquered, to a certain extent, by the home influence; and almost all have now some small "annex" for women also. I met many years ago, in Fayal, a middle-aged English woman who had lived for fifteen years on board ship with her husband, her sons being already launched as sailors. Her husband was a high official in the

Masonic fraternity, and she had, through some accident, become possessed, in a foreign port, of some secrets of that order. To settle the matter then and there, she was initiated and pledged to secrecy, so that no further trouble should come. Her discovery was the more remarkable, as she was very deaf; and her initiation more so, as she was by no means dumb; but her husband confirmed the story, and said that she was the only woman in the world thus honored. I cannot vouch for the tale, but it is certain that most of these secret orders now provide some equivalent or parallel course for women. Wives can belong, equally with their husbands, to the Farmers' Grange; they can join the Home Circle, as is fitting; or the Knights and Ladies of Honor, or the Order of Protection, or of United Friends, or the P. F. Y. B. O., or the Golden Cross. Strange to say, they can enter the order of Pilgrim Fathers, of which, in the city where I live, one of them is actually sergeant-at-arms; but they cannot join the Order of Haymakers. Moreover, if the husband is a Mason, the wife can at least belong to the Order of the Eastern Star; if he is an Odd Fellow, she can be an Odd Lady; if he attains to the G. U. of O. F., she can be a Daughter of Ruth, which is something; if

there is a Son of St. George in the family, there can also be a Daughter of St. George; if there is a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, there is a Woman's Relief Corps, consisting of those who do the duty of peaceful *vivandières* for those worthy veterans.

I beg that I may not be understood as speaking with any disrespect of these various bodies, of which, it must be confessed, I know very little. It is probable that they do much good, first through the practice of charity, and again as an education in mutual courtesy and self-control. All that is to be feared from them, for men or women, is the possibility of excess. A dinner is a good thing, but half a dozen dinners a day would land a person in the hospital. A social club or a benefit club is an admirable thing, but a man or a woman cannot by any possibility belong to half a dozen without peril. More money will go into them than will ever come out of them, and the expenditure of time will be something tremendous. Women especially, to whom such things are new, will be more endangered than men, because they will be more conscientious and punctilious. On any "Social Register" you will see the name of a rich man with eight or ten clubs following after it; he perhaps fre-

quents one or two, and merely pays his dues to the rest and lets them go. There is an element of honest fidelity about women which is incompatible with this; if one of them belongs to any organization she takes it in earnest. Besides the secret orders, she very likely belongs to several "Patriotic Orders," to a "Helping Hand" or a "Cheerful Letter" association; she visits a sewing-school or a college settlement, and corresponds enormously with the agents of distant schools. She does not really wish to be a Mrs. Jellyby or to be like Mrs. S. Cora Grubb in Mrs. Wiggins's best story, but she feels—or her home and children feel—that she is slipping in that direction every day. When the collapse comes and nervous prostration sets in, who is responsible?

In dealing with the American temperament we must remember that we have to do with a laborious and nervous race, usually in an exhausting climate; that they are hurried on by what a poet called "the Whip of the Sky." Even English women break down under the pressure of work not so hard as ours, for in spite of the immense amount accomplished by such women as Lady Henry Somerset and Mrs. Chant, we must remember that it was one of our countrywomen who, after living long

in England, expressed the opinion that what an English woman would describe as a busy day, an American woman would call an idle day. Especially in regard to domestic service, so perfectly are the wheels of household life oiled in older countries that all this department of care is reduced to a minimum. The comparative poverty of the masses makes English life easier than ours for the well-to-do. An American mother, going to England with young children, finds easily a nursery governess, refined and ladylike, who will rejoice to come and live with her, teaching the children, for £20 a year or about $2 a week, a relief she cannot obtain here for twice the money. But to live as Americans live, and do the work they have to perform for themselves, is a drain which makes "overclubbableness" simply one more disease for men or women, in a complication of dangerous symptoms.

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XXXV

LIVING BY THE CHURCH

THE clown in "Twelfth Night" tells Viola that he lives by the church, and adds by way of explanation that he lives at his house, and his house doth stand by the church. The present writer has a similar juxtaposition, and finds it in many ways advantageous. My roses and lilies in the garden-bed are safer than if they stood next to the police-office; and when on one occasion two boys in the street had insulted some ladies, I collared one of them—the other running away—and took him before my reverend neighbor with much more confidence of results than if it had been his Honor the Mayor. The result duly followed, and was quite beyond my expectation; for the next day the boy who had run away, and whom I could not possibly have identified, came to see me unescorted, and, confessing that he and he alone was the culprit,

asked for forgiveness. The Municipal Court could hardly have adjusted the matter so neatly and so promptly.

There constantly passes before me in full view a panorama of the daily life of the Roman Catholic parish-priesthood—the visits of high and low, particularly low—the arrival of hired carriages with weddings and baptismal parties—and the too profuse carriages for funerals. Then often at midnight I hear the stable doors roll back and the horse's hoofs soon after crunch upon the gravel, as the faithful priests drive away on some errand of mercy; and sometimes by day, as I am cutting the grass on the lawn, a man will come straggling past and volunteer the information that his wife has persuaded him to go and take the pledge before the praste, God bless him. Pledges thus taken, I am told, are almost sure to be kept, because they are given only for short periods, and perhaps renewed from time to time; the pledged man reporting at brief intervals and being kept under constant supervision. The regular church work I cannot watch, for the building lies on the other side of the house, accessible by a covered passage; but I know that good Father O'Brien, the predecessor of the present in-

cumbent, once said to me wearily that he knew confession to be a divinely ordained ordinance, for no mere man would have put upon his fellow-men anything so hard. Knowing all this, it did not trouble me at all, but was only gratifying, when I used to hear often, on Sunday noon, the click of the billiard-balls through Father ——'s open window after his two wearisome masses; nor do I believe that he heard that click recurring, as a record against him, before the Recording Angel, in that heaven where he now deservedly dwells. I have not heard it on earth since he went; but it is delightful to see his successors refreshing themselves some Saturday, after a hard week's work, with a game of hand-ball in the high brick court which they have built for that purpose behind the stable. His Reverence, the senior priest, can outplay either of his young assistants, to say nothing of their stout hired man, who occasionally takes a hand with them; and when the game is over, and the small boys of the parish take their turn in the court, it is pleasant to see his Reverence linger and advise them where to stand and how to await the ball. It is always agreeable to see dignity so intrenched and sure in its position that it can be familiar

without fear. I can remember when in youth I lost my place as teacher at a boarding-school, mainly because I had given lessons in sparring to some of the older boys.

It is impossible to think of my neighbors except as men who would do for me any act of kindness, and whom I respect with my whole heart. No doubt they wish their Church to inherit the earth, and in their secret souls expect it: what branch of the reverend clergy does not? Nor have I been able to induce them to cast me out into outer darkness, as one of the wicked, though I have several times called their attention to that extreme necessity. On the contrary, their theory of salvation appears very elastic; they seem to regard all well-meaning persons as constructively or potentially within the pale of redemption; and my dear lamented neighbor—he of the billiard-balls—was wont to assure me that he did not worry himself about me at all. And yet it sometimes comes across the mind, after a chat with one of them, how our whole mental attitudes are so utterly remote, the one from the other, that it almost seems a wonder that we should meet on the same planet, to say nothing of the same street. What two beings can be further apart, one

asks, than a human soul which glories in being absolutely subject to an external authority, and one which cannot see either the need or the possibility of such an appeal? It is not possible to have an authority outside of one's own private judgment, for what can select or accept that authority save that private judgment? How can your mental faculties possibly set up for you a tribunal which shall override themselves? They can no more do it than a stream can rise higher than its source; no more than you can build your house downward from the chimney-top; no more than you can raise yourself from the ground by tugging at your own garments. So long as you are resting on your own faculties, you must rest on them, and to imagine that you can substitute something—as an infallible church or even an infallible book—does not really help you in the least, because the same reason and conscience which put it there can at any moment take it away or disregard it. Disguise it as you please, you are trusting your own powers at last, because you have nothing else to trust to; just as, no matter how thoroughly you have put yourself into a physician's hands, it is only a temporary arrangement, and nothing can take from you

the right or the power to disregard his prescriptions and substitute those of some other physician, or even your own.

Many of the current objections to the Roman Catholic Church seem to me trivial or untenable. It is not easy to show that it does not produce as good saints or poets or scientists as any other body of men, or that it produces more criminals when we compare, class for class, the same social grade. Of course poverty is responsible for a great many sins, and for a still larger proportion of convictions in court, were it only for the want of bondsmen or paid counsel. Therefore the church which has most of the poor will naturally have the most criminals. I used to think, as many do, that the Roman Catholic Church, with all its merits, produced people less truth-telling than were elsewhere found; but was rather taken aback by the remark of a young Irish girl, one of two sisters whom I had seen go through college with the greatest credit and teach Greek to their priests afterwards. I had said something on the subject to her, she being a thoroughly candid and ingenuous soul. "Do you really mean," she said, "that you put a little less faith in people's word for their being Catholics?" "Yes,"

I said, "I fear I do." "It is very strange," she thoughtfully replied; "that is just the way my sister and I feel about Protestants." It reminded me of De Goncourt's saying, "After all, every political discussion comes back to this: I am better than you" (*Je suis meilleur que vous*). It is much the same with the comparison of religions.

For myself, I never should be led to become a Roman Catholic, as many are led, by the dignity and beauty of the ritual; because even that is tame and dull compared with the impressiveness of the Greek Church, even as one sees it in Paris, with its stately, melodious, black-bearded priests, its pewless churches, and the utter reverence of its kneeling congregations. There are, however, many points of view in which the Roman Catholic Church is very attractive. But every church claiming infallibility, whether for a pope or for a book, is hampered by this fatal logical defect—this "vicious circle," as the logicians say—that it has to employ reason and conscience to set up the very authority which is to override reason and conscience. We all depend upon our private judgment at last, because we have nothing else to depend upon. To claim anything else is to practise an unconscious jug-

gling with our own minds. I invariably find that the ablest of the younger converts from the Roman Catholic Church—who are numerous, as are the converts in the other direction —give this as the essential ground of their change. And I also find that the very able Roman Catholic newspaper which I read every week, while prompt to answer—and usually with success—all the superficial arguments against the church, keeps absolutely silent as to this vital and final obstacle.

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THE END